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AT TROON**

Mistrust mars Ulster hope

The IRA resumed its ceasefire yesterday. No one was celebrating

David McKitterick
Ireland Correspondent

No one in Northern Ireland was indifferent to the IRA's resumption of violence which came into effect at noon yesterday, but nearly everyone pretended to be. Nearly everyone simply stayed home, lounged in the garden, visited the pub or the supermarket: no cheers went up, no champagne popped, no church bells rang. It was a most understated ceasefire.

If few emotions were expressed it was not because the ceasefire did not exist: rather it was that there were too many of them, and that they ran too deep. There is hope for the future, relief and a deep desire for peace; but there is also bitterness, suspicion, fear and even rejection.

There was the saintly father of a murdered Catholic girl, 19-year-old Bernadette Martin, shot in bed by loyalists a week ago for having a Protestant boyfriend. In the depths of his

grief, he found the courage to say he would be elated if she were the last victim of the Troubles.

INSIDE
The road to peace, pages 4-5
Leading article, page 14

But the experience of the last ceasefire, in 1994, was that a ceasefire is only a beginning. The last one lasted 17 months, and no one is betting on how long this one might endure.

The effect of the last one was to drastically decrease the killing rate, to bring new hope where there was none, to give a glimpse of a new and brighter future. But it only reduced the rate of death, it did not end the toll. It did not end the so-called punitive 'rent' levies; it did not lead to the dismantling of the paramilitary organisations, republican or loyalist; it did not remove the poisons that pollute community relations; it did not bring a political settlement into being. Many Unionists will say in fact that it was bogus, most nationalists will retort that an imperfect ceasefire still had great worth. The arguments over those points, familiar from 1994, have already re-surfaced. There was no euphoria yes-

terday, but then people have forgotten that there was none in 1994 either. The Independent recorded at the time: "People did not dance in the streets. They said, 'I'll believe it when I see it'. They said, 'I'll believe what the murdering bastards will get out of it'. They said, 'It's a con'."

The IRA is putting the same deal on the table again: soldiers, police, town centres and Canary Wharf are no longer at risk, but the organisation will not disarm or hand over guns, and will never say that the ceasefire is permanent. London and Dublin have accepted these terms; the Protestant and Unionist community is wondering whether it should too.

In the meantime, there will be a sharp rise in political discord as Unionist politicians decide whether to sit at the table with Sinn Féin or whether to risk walking into a wilderness: each course carries huge risks. Yesterday seemed however to be mostly a day for quiet contemplation rather than heated controversy or excitement.

Up the Falls Road, just after midday, Tom Hartley of Sinn Féin told a crowd of less than a 100 outside a heavily-fortified RUC base: "We choose to mark the first minutes of the ceasefire here because the ceasefire will bring our freedom, will bring the realisation of our hopes and our aspirations, will bring equality, will bring the release of prisoners. When you look around the crowd here today you see in so many of our faces the hopes for the future."

The faces did indeed reflect some hope but there was no euphoria in sight. He did not promise them that this promised land would be achieved quickly; if he had, they would not have believed him. Instead they, like everyone else, hoped that a start had been made and that this ceasefire would be longer and more productive than the last. But they also conveyed that the road, wherever it led, would be a long and arduous one, with no guarantee of ultimate success. Further, success will entail from every side a compromise on fundamental positions of a type which Ulster has never yet seen: there is no other way. This sobering knowledge helps explain why it was such a subdued ceasefire.



Breakthrough: A British soldier marches through a protest outside Woodburn Army/RUC Barracks in West Belfast yesterday, soon after the midday ceasefire. Photograph: Brian Harris

Don't wreck deal, PM to tell Trimble

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Prime Minister will today appeal to David Trimble not to wreck the Belfast peace talks by offering the Ulster Unionist leader assurances that the IRA will be required to hand over weapons while Sinn Féin are at the negotiating table.

Tony Blair's plea for peace at a meeting with Mr Trimble at Downing Street will be coupled with details of the Government's plans for ensuring the decommissioning does not turn into the sham that the Unionists fear.

Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, plans to meet Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin, by the end of the week to discuss his role in the peace process.

Labour MPs today will call on the Speaker, Betty Boothroyd to reverse the ban on the use of the Commons by Mr Adams and the chief negotiator, Martin McGuinness, who were elected as MPs in May but are refusing to take up their seats.

"I would be astonished if someone does not raise this question with the Speaker. How can Parliament leave the ban on Gerry Adams if we are asking the Unionists to take the IRA ceasefire on face value. It is absurd," said the Labour MP Alan Simpson.

Mr Blair will tell Mr Trimble that John de Chastelain, a former head of the Canadian defence forces, will be appointed before the end of July to head the international body which will oversee the decommissioning of IRA and Loyal-

ist paramilitary weapons. Mr Blair will guarantee that the body will be up and running before 15 September, the day fixed for the first substantive session of talks which Sinn Féin will be allowed to attend, following the restoration of the ceasefire by the IRA.

It remained unclear last night whether the assurances will be enough to persuade Mr Trimble not to wreck the talks on Wednesday, when the decommissioning proposals are due to be voted on in the plenary session of the cross-party talks. The Unionists, who have accused the Government of trying to fudge the issue of disarming the IRA, have submitted amendments demanding "substantive disarmament" from the start of the talks and that the weapons hand-over

should be completed by May 1998, the deadline imposed by the British and Irish governments for bringing the talks to a conclusion and putting the proposals to the people in referendums, North and South.

Last night the Government was still unwilling to accept their amendments. Unless Mr Blair can persuade Mr Trimble to back down, the Unionists will vote down the decommissioning plans on Wednesday, effectively scuppering the round-table talks process. Mr Blair's colleagues privately fear the talks could be dealt a lethal blow by the Unionists on Wednesday, although John Taylor, Mr Trimble's deputy, raised the possibility of continuing bilateral meetings with the Government.

Mr Blair is also likely to re-

mind Mr Trimble that the people in Ulster and international opinion will blame the Unionists for throwing away the chance of a peace process, but the fall-back position for the two governments is to press ahead with their plans for twin referendums next year.

Mr Taylor said he could not

take part in talks with Sinn Féin "with a gun to my head". "We mustn't be conned by what Sinn Féin-IRA have decided. The Government have given in to the IRA demands that the multi-party talks should proceed on the basis that there will be no decommissioning," he said on BBC radio.

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A study of children exposed to television for the first time has shown that their behaviour improves - contradicting the stereotypical belief that exposure to the mass media increases violence and anti-social conduct.

The "remarkable" findings are the result of research in St Helena, a remote British dependency in the South Atlantic, which had no access to free television until 1995. Page 3

Devolution blueprint
Tony Blair is to launch the campaign for Scottish devolution this week with a White Paper in which he promises a "new Scotland in a new Britain".

Urging a "double yes" vote, for a parliament with tax-raising powers, the White Paper will make it clear that sovereignty will stay with the Westminster Parliament, reinforcing the Government's denials that it will lead to the break-up of the Union. Page 8

Immigration scandal
New Yorkers are shocked to have discovered how deaf and dumb illegal Mexican immigrants were being lured to the US for a life of virtual slavery. By yesterday morning, seven people had been arrested on charges of smuggling in the Mexicans and forcing them into squalor and indentured servitude from which there was no escape. Page 10

UK residency could deliver taxman Goldsmith fortune

Steve Boggan

Founding the Referendum Party may have cost Sir James Goldsmith's family more than the £20m he sank into it during the general election campaign. International tax experts believe his decision to renew his residency status in the UK in order to contest the election could result in the Inland Revenue demanding a stake in his assets around the world.

If the tax authorities in France - where Sir James was officially domiciled - or in Spain - where he chose to die - were claiming death duties, experts yesterday said they would levy them on assets only in those countries. However, if the Inland Revenue becomes involved, his heirs will be given an inheritance tax bill based on all his assets worldwide - up to 40 per cent of £1.5bn.

Sir James, 64, died at his farmhouse near Martella in southern Spain on Saturday after losing a battle against pancreatic cancer. As speculation over an international tax scramble grew last night, his widow, Lady Annabel, and son Benjamin, 16, returned to the family home in Richmond, west



Sir James: Revenue could take stake of world assets

London, followed by his daughter, Jessica, and son-in-law Imran Khan, the former Pakistani cricket captain.

While arrangements for Sir James's funeral were being finalised, Patrick Robertson, his spokesman, denied reports that the billionaire businessman had moved from his chateau in Burgundy to his Spanish farm-

house to avoid higher death duties of 60 per cent in France, compared with 40 per cent in Spain.

He moved simply to get some sunshine and to die in the very same bed he was born in in France in 1933, said Mr Robertson. "That is the only reason. I am sure his other affairs will have been dealt with by his lawyers."

Nevertheless, the decision may further complicate the final sharing out of the proceeds of his estate, which includes seven homes in England, France, Spain, Mexico and America, among three families. He was married three times, had a mistress, Laetitia Boulay de la Meurthe, and had eight children by the four women.

Although Sir James was domiciled in France, his decision to die in Spain might give the Spanish authorities a claim to some of his fortune. However, tax experts believe that the Inland Revenue may deem that he was domiciled in Britain because of his decision to stand in the election, because of the increasing amount of time he spent in England and because of his family ties here.

They refer to a 10-year bat-

tle in the courts following the death of Sir Charles Clore, founder of Sears Holdings, in 1979. Like Sir James, his lifestyle was truly international and his heirs resisted the UK's claim on his assets. However, the Inland Revenue won the fight and levied inheritance tax on his global estate.

"The Inland Revenue takes into account lots of factors in deciding whether it considers a person was domiciled here - it doesn't simply mean being resident here," said John Whiting, a tax partner at Price Waterhouse. "It is a peculiar term, but it relates to where the Inland Revenue believes you had your home. You can be domiciled here even if you live abroad, simply because your parents were."

"There are many factors - having a home or business here, the time you spend here - but it is rather like having malaria. Once you have it, it is a very difficult status to get rid of."

Last night, Lord McAlpine, the former Conservative Party treasurer who defected to the Referendum Party last year, was named as Sir James's successor as leader of the party. Larger than life, page 6

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Elderly woman dies in hot-air balloon tragedy

An elderly woman was killed and 12 people were injured yesterday when a hot air balloon crashed into power lines and its passenger basket plunged 30ft to the ground before bursting into flames.

Onlookers watched in horror as the wicker basket became detached from the balloon and crashed into a field where a gas cylinder it was carrying exploded.

The dead woman, who was celebrating her birthday with the balloon ride, was last night named as Audrey Jones, 75, from Heston, Hammersmith. She was in the balloon with her son and grandson who were only slightly hurt in the crash. The balloon took off from nearby Heston Hall but was unable to maintain its height. A lifeboat was launched as the pilot of the balloon attempted an emergency landing on edge of the River Humber, but it took off again, narrowly missing trees before crashing into the power lines at the riverside village of North Ferry. Six of the injured were taken to Hull Royal Infirmary by helicopter and the rest by ambulance. Among the four seriously injured were a woman with spinal injuries and a man with burns and a suspected fractured skull.

Claire White

Millennium Dome prompts eco-rage

Environmental campaigners have threatened to take action over the proposed use of a "toxic" material in the roof of the Millennium Dome. Campaigners claim the roof is to be coated in PVC, a material which gives off highly poisonous dioxins during manufacture and disposal.

Lord Melchett, executive director of Greenpeace, has written to Peter Mandelson, the minister in charge of the scheme, warning him that "very, very determined efforts will be made to stop its construction", and describing PVC as "one of the most environmentally damaging building materials it is possible to find".

The New Millennium Experience Company Limited, the government firm building the dome, said in a statement: "We have consistently asked Greenpeace to recommend a viable alternative to the fabric chosen to cover the dome, but they have been unable to do so".

Claire White

Thatcher's academic enterprise



Baroness Thatcher, the former prime minister, is hoping to establish a professorship at Cambridge University to further the study of economic enterprise, it was confirmed yesterday.

A university spokesman said administrators were in negotiations with the Thatcher Foundation on plans to endow a chair of economic and industrial enterprise. Reports suggest the foundation will pay £1.9m to set up the

professorship in the Judge Institute of Management Studies. "The university would seek to appoint a candidate with an outstanding academic record in the field of management studies, thereby to use the generous benefaction to further enhance the high reputation of the Judge Institute of Management Studies," the spokesman said.

Boy's disappearance baffles police

Detectives investigating the disappearance of nine-year-old Scott Simpson yesterday admitted they have no idea what has happened to the boy. More than 100 police officers, civilians, divers and mountain rescue team members have scoured a huge area of north Aberdeen for the child, who has not been seen since Thursday afternoon. Scott's mother Patsy repeated her belief that he had been kidnapped and pleaded for her son's safe return. But police urged residents to keep in mind that he could be lying injured or be frightened to come home. The last positive sighting of Scott was at 4pm on Thursday when he talked to his aunt outside a shop 200 yards from his home. Three hours earlier he had been seen talking to a "weird" man who gave him a roll-up cigarette beside a nearby football park. Police divers continued a search of a two-mile stretch of the River Don.

MPs on guard against unfair laws

The Equal Opportunities Commission is enlisting MPs as vigilantes for its cause with a package of measures designed to put equality into every government measure.

Although ministers have rejected the idea of a House of Commons select committee on equal opportunities, the commission is working with MPs to set up an all-party group instead. It is also sending a "check-list" to all MPs, MEPs and peers to arm them with questions they should ask to assess the impact of legislation on men and women. Kamlesh Bahl, chairwoman of the EOC, said that a great deal of legislation had passed through Parliament without anyone realising that it was discriminatory. This had led to costly legal cases which could have been avoided. The Building Societies Act, for example, decreed that there should be only one member per account. Because couples often described themselves as "Mr and Mrs", women were not deemed to be members; the loophole means that wives do not automatically get their share of windfall payouts.

Fran Abrams

Survey to shed light on impotence

More than 5,000 impotent men and their partners are to be questioned about their problem in the biggest survey of its kind ever undertaken in Britain. The aim is to find out how much help is currently given to the one in 10 men who suffer from the problem.

Although impotence, or erectile dysfunction, is treatable in 95 per cent of cases, only 5 per cent of sufferers actively seek help, usually because of embarrassment or ignorance. Dr Alan Riley, chairman of the association, said: "This [survey] will help us evaluate current services, and highlight areas for improvement, with a view to encouraging more people to come forward and seek help." Heavy smoking and alcohol consumption are both associated with impotence, which can be caused by a range of physical conditions, such as narrowing of the arteries or diabetes, as well as by psychological problems.

National Lottery jackpot winners

Two ticket-holders shared Saturday's £7.9m National Lottery jackpot. The winning numbers were 7, 19, 36, 44, 45 and 47. The bonus ball was 4.

people



Holy marching orders: The Dean yesterday, as his decision to quit was announced (Photograph: PA)

Dean of Lincoln set to earn £250,000 for his resignation

The Dean of Lincoln may be granted a £250,000 pay-off, following his resignation after an eight-year power struggle with ecclesiastical opponents in a saga worthy of Trollope.

The Very Reverend Brandon Jackson, 62, is expected to be given a substantial settlement after agreeing to leave his post to settle the row in the Lincoln diocese. Downing Street is expected to make the announcement on Thursday.

Dr Jackson has been involved in a bitter dispute with his sub-dean, Rex Davis, since the late 1980s, when Canon Davis's fundraising trip to Australia with the Lincoln copy of the Magna Carta incurred losses of more than £25,000.

The diocese has been torn apart by squabbles and personal jealousies ever since, in a feud described by The Archbishop of Canterbury as a "scandalous dishonouring the name of our Lord".

Tensions were raised further when a part-time vergier, Verity Freestone, alleged Dr Jackson had attempted to have a sexual relationship with her.

He was, however, acquitted of conduct unbecoming a man in holy orders, following a four-day consistory

court hearing in July, 1995. Miss Freestone, 33, had claimed Dr Jackson committed on how attractive she was; and once told her she had "come to bed with" him.

Dr Jackson, 62, denied the allegations and after his acquittal accused a canon of lying, and the bishop of taking part in a conspiracy against him. He then called for the cathedral to be closed for six months to find it could be exorcised of evil.

Dr Jackson was asked to stand down last year by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but he refused to go without a generous pay-off. "I am ready and willing to go when the Archbishop comes up with the cash," he said at the time.

It was reported that he would agree to stand down for a sum in excess of £250,000; and yesterday it appeared he had agreed a figure.

The compensation could be high because he believes he is unlikely to get another ministry, given his age, and the circumstances surrounding his departure from Lincoln.

Dr Jackson is thought to have tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister, who is responsible for appointing many English cathedral deans. Colin Brown

Howe attacks book on Patten's Hong Kong years

Lord Howe, the former chancellor and foreign secretary, yesterday launched a stinging attack on Chris Patten's governorship of Hong Kong, as depicted in Jonathan Dimbleby's just-published book on the handover.

Hitting back at claims that he attempted to deal with China behind Mr Patten's back, Lord Howe (right) wrote of his "anger at such baseless allegations".

He condemned the book, *The Last Governor*, as "lamentable" and "ungenerous", and feared it would come to trouble Mr Patten as much as the Dimbleby book on Prince Charles must now trouble the future king.

He accused Dimbleby of making "surreal and unjust accusations of treachery and foul play by senior government ministers and civil servants" which had added "much unnecessary pain" to the emotional handover process.

"Christopher Patten's reputation, too, will suffer from his unwise decision to place the record of his governorship at the mercy of this celebrity journalist who smells 'betrayal' round every corner," Lord Howe wrote in yesterday's *Sunday Times*.

The clear split in approaches between Mr Patten and Lord Howe towards dealing with China was



evident at last month's ceremony. Howe and Sir Edward Heath were the only two senior British politicians to attend the Chinese reception, which was shunned by Mr Patten and Tony Blair.

But Lord Howe wrote that the Mr Patten was questioning the motives of almost all but himself. If his initial dealings with China had been less blunt, then the later antagonism could have been avoided. He described Dimbleby as the last governor's "lago-like accomplice".

Dimbleby said Lord Howe's concern for China was "enhanced" by his seat on the board of GEC, which had business interests there. But Lord Howe said he had never sat on the GEC board and still less would he have allowed any commercial interest to influence his work.

Louise Jury

Royal marriage favoured by Tories

Senior Conservatives yesterday said they were in favour of Prince Charles marrying Camilla Parker Bowles, but they thought he was copying up too much to Tony Blair over the Government's plans for taking more young people off welfare and into work.

The Prince of Wales is due to meet Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, today for the latest in a series of meetings in public and in private with senior Cabinet ministers.

Tory MPs believe Prince Charles is seeking a closer relationship with the Government, to ensure the Prime Minister's approval when he seeks to marry Mrs Parker Bowles, whose 50th birthday party was organised by the Prince, and was widely interpreted as a move designed to "soften-up" public opinion.

Lord Archer, the Tory peer, who backed William Hague's leadership campaign, said he was in favour of the Prince marrying Mrs Parker Bowles but he believed he was getting too close to the Government. "I think it is very dangerous for him to become involved in political issues."

Lord Blake, a Tory constitutional expert, said: "He is getting a bit too near. The welfare-to-work business is an important part of Labour's policy and it is a controversial part. He appears to be endorsing it."

briefing

WELFARE

Jobless hampered by 'snakes and ladders' benefit system

The benefits system repeatedly throws up obstacles to jobless claimants trying to find work, according to a report published today. The survey, by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, said that for jobseekers on low incomes, the system "can resemble a game of snakes and ladders".

The "sticks and carrots" designed to encourage people to take jobs had a limited impact, with gains from Government welfare-to-work initiatives often quickly cancelled out by the loss of other help, it said.

While the report welcomed measures by the Labour Government to get people back into work - including a review of the benefits system - it said that more needed to be done to break the cycle of welfare dependency.

"In-work" benefits, such as family credit, which were supposed to boost people on low incomes, often failed to do so because their effect was blunted by additional work-related costs, such as child care.

Instead of providing a stepping stone into better-paid, more secure work, they simply ended up supporting people in a cycle of low-paid, short-term jobs, punctuated by further periods of unemployment.

DIET

Misleading claims on vitamin pills

Manufacturers of vitamin and diet supplements are breaking the law by claiming their products can prevent, cure or treat disease, the Food Commission says.

A survey of 314 vitamin and diet supplements found 60 carried overtly medicinal claims for their health benefits on labels, in leaflets or in press releases.

Examples include Propolis, made by Neener's Herbal Products, which is claimed to be "effective in treating hardening of the arteries, hypertension and coronary heart disease".

A Japanese mushroom extract made by Solgar Vitamins is said to have been "successfully used for the treatment of high blood pressure, cancer, immune disease and liver disorders".

It is against the law to make such claims unless the product is licensed as a pharmaceutical drug. The Food Commission, the independent consumer watchdog, says a series of tests cases are needed to clarify the law, combined with tougher regulations. Jeremy Laurence



HEALTH

Hormone presents cancer risk

Post-menopausal women with high levels of the female hormone oestradiol in their blood are at higher risk of developing breast cancer, researchers have found.

A study of 2,500 women from Guernsey who were followed for 13 years from 1977 to 1990 found those with high levels of the hormone were up to five times more likely to develop breast cancer than those with low levels.

Blood samples taken from the women revealed the higher level of the hormone an average of eight years before the cancer was diagnosed, showing that it was not an effect of the disease.

The findings, published in the *British Journal of Cancer*, will improve understanding of the disease but do not offer a preventive technique. Screening for the hormone is not possible and the only known factor affecting its level in the blood is obesity, the scientists from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund say. Jeremy Laurence

TRAVEL

Weekenders head for Dublin

Dublin has become a favourite destination among Britons for a city break, according to a travel survey. For the first time, the Irish capital has reached the top 10 in a list of most popular overseas breaks, compiled by holiday company Travelscene.

"Five years ago, Dublin was not even in the top 20, let alone the top 10," said a Travelscene spokesman. "The latest figures show how far the cities market has developed over the years," he added.

Other big upward movers in the top 10 table are Prague, where demand is continuing to outstrip supply, and Lille, which has been boosted by the Channel Tunnel Eurostar service.

Other cities coming back into the top 20 are Nice (17th), Milan (19th) and Athens (20th).

Paris and Amsterdam once again keep their positions at the top of the table and together with Rome, Madrid and Venice, are survivors from the top 10 of 10 years ago. Of the 1987 top 10, Berlin and Luxembourg are no longer even in the 1997 top 20.

Favourite places	
1.	Paris (1)
2.	Amsterdam (2)
3.	Brussels (3)
4.	Brussels (5)
5.	Barcelona (6)
6.	Rome (5)
7.	Prague (10)
8.	Venice (7)
9.	Madrid (8)
10.	Dublin (13)

(1987 positions in brackets)

ECONOMY

Skills shortage hits small firms

The growth of the British economy is being restricted by a skills shortage, according to almost two-thirds of British exporters, who took part in the latest DHL Quarterly Export Indicator. The report said smaller companies were most exposed to the skills shortage.

"Low levels of unemployment coupled with the healthy state of the economy means that a lot of companies are finding that there is no longer enough skilled labour to go around," said Nick Butcher, managing director of DHL International (UK).

The report also showed support for a single currency was growing. Sixty-two per cent of exporters said they would consider British participation in a single currency helpful.

Whilst China and Russia were said to be the most difficult markets to break into, those who had managed to initiate trade with those countries expected to increase sales.

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IND001

Ulster: the road to peace

Talks dilemma for Trimble as Unionism faces defining moment

David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

A year ago David Trimble gave a Unionist audience an insight into his philosophy of leadership. "I prefer not to work out the details of our tactics until I see what the situation actually is," he explained. "I remember very much Napoleon's adage that no plan survives contact with the enemy."

He was at the time riding on the crest of a wave, busily harvesting concessions from a Conservative government desperate to keep his goodwill. But today he is on the horns of a difficult dilemma, having discovered that Labour, the republican movement and the Irish government have all proved capable of playing a much longer game than he had envisaged.

Neither London nor Dublin has accepted his characterisation of the republican movement as something which "has to be smashed". Instead they are about to bring Sinn Féin to the table, leaving him to make the most important decision of his life: whether to join them or walk away.

It will be a knife-edge decision. Mr Trimble has spent his career on the right of Unionism: a Tory minister once famously said that he "nearly puked up my Prosties" on hearing the Unionist leader described as a moderate. When elected leader of the Ulster Unionist party two years ago he was the most hard-line of the five candidates.

Yet as an intelligent and comparatively young man he has also displayed modernising instincts. Keenly aware of the need to project a better image for Unionism, he will be aware that a boycott of talks would be both a political and public relations disaster.

His election followed "Drumcree I", the 1995 Port-

down marching controversy in which he was noted for his uncompromising stand. This, his Upper Bann constituency, was the birthplace of Orangism and remains its heartland; its MP is therefore required to be staunch in defence of the Orange cause.

When he became an MP in 1990 he was already an Orangeman of long standing as well as a figure identified firmly with the right. His early career had in fact been one of opposition to the Ulster Unionist party on the grounds that it was too soft and prone to compromise.

By 1978, however, he had quietly joined its ranks, though it was not until the 1990s that his career took off at a pace which

troops and end the splintering in the ranks. There are so many factions and divisions of opinion, in fact, that it is impossible to say whether a majority of Protestants and Unionists would wish him to leave the talks or stay in them.

Most of the activists in his party seem strongly wedded to the idea that arms decommissioning must be guaranteed before the party shares a table with Sinn Féin. This is also the strong position of his chief rivals for Unionist votes, the Rev Ian Paisley and Robert McCartney.

But the position is very different elsewhere in the Unionist spectrum. Senior figures in the business community favour the idea of talking, guns or no guns. So too do the fringe loyalist parties, who have a certain empathy with the IRA position: their loyalist paramilitary associates have themselves made it clear they will not be handing over any weapons. Some senior Protestant clergymen are also against the idea of a walkout.

Mr Trimble is also presumably aware that he has dangerous enemies within the top ranks of his own party and they will be eager to capitalise on any false move he makes. One of these was memorably described by a close observer: "He's as intent on destabilising from the inside as Paisley and company are from the outside. He just sits at the back like a big pasha, doesn't intervene but watches for the main chance."

The dilemma is an acute one. If Mr Trimble stays in the talks and cannot survive the inevitable criticism his leadership could be destroyed. But if he exits he could leave his party stranded on the outside while the peace train moves on without it. It is thus a moment of definition both for his party and for Unionism as a whole.

'Those hoping he would become a De Klerk figure have been disappointed'

in Unionist terms could only be described as meteoric. Those who had hoped, perhaps fancifully, that he would become a De Klerk figure have so far been disappointed as he has if anything aligned Unionism even more closely with Orangism.

One of his biggest problems is that Unionism and Orangism are both now possibly more internally divided than ever before. Two years on, his leadership is still in its infancy, but even within that period the divisions and confusions have widened considerably.

In other words he has been unable to find and raise a Unionist standard to rally the



David Trimble: One of his biggest problems is that Unionism and Orangism are divided

Security forces set to keep up their guard

Steve Boggan
and Jason Bennett

A week before the IRA rocked London's Docklands with a huge bomb, ending the last fragile ceasefire, Sir Hugh Annesley, chief constable of the RUC at the time, was asked whether the terrorists were planning to end the peace.

His answer, which must still haunt him, is indicative of the extent to which the security services were taken by surprise.

"Are they intent on doing anything to breach the ceasefire? On the intelligence patterns at the moment, the answer is no," he said. In the immediate aftermath of the Docklands bombing, MI5, which has overall responsibility for surveillance and intelligence-gathering, took the blame for failing to spot warning signs that an IRA "spectacular" was imminent.

Scotland Yard's Anti-Terrorist Branch and Special Branch officers were quick to leak details of warnings they had given, but the bickering served only to highlight weaknesses in communication and command structures within the intelligence community.

Yesterday security sources were expressing profound cynicism over the latest ceasefire and insisted that they would not let their guard down again.

During the last ceasefire, IRA cells remained active, conducting dry runs in preparation for the resumption of hostilities.

Units were monitored carrying out operations that included realistic elements of bombing runs without involving actual bombs.

Some known terrorists were found to be identifying potential targets and monitoring their movements in preparation for possible assassination attempts. Others continued to stockpile weapons and explosives.

One cell, whose members

were recently sentenced to 35 years in prison, used the lull in the violence to prepare a bombing campaign aimed at destroying strategic electrical sub-stations in and around London, a move likely to have caused chaos and loss of life.

A joint MI5 and police operation caught the terrorists last July before they could plant their bombs, but officers later realised that the cell had been making timing devices and studying maps of the national grid at public libraries during the ceasefire.

That operation and another two months later, in which ten tonnes of explosives were seized, are believed to be the result of much better co-operation between the security services since the appointment of Commander John Grieve as head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch.

He took up his post shortly before the Docklands bombing - too soon before it, colleagues say, to have made a difference - and has fostered closer ties with MI5 ever since.

During the last ceasefire, there was a small drift of resources away from anti-terrorist activities within MI5 and Special Branch offices, but that will not happen this time, according to an MI5 source.

"We will not let our guard down for one moment," he said. "It is clear that the IRA carried on planning atrocities during the last ceasefire and we did what we could to monitor that. There was criticism at the time, but we felt much of that was not justified."

"However, this time, all the parties involved feel better prepared to tackle the threat posed by IRA cells on the mainland. On the evidence of the last ceasefire, IRA units in Britain may continue to carry out dry runs, stockpile weapons and identify possible targets. It is our job to ensure that they do not do those things undetected. They won't stop their work and we won't stop ours."

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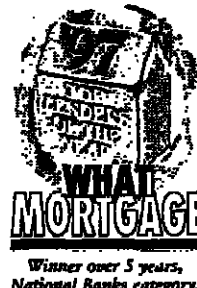
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Ulster: the road to peace

Celebrations muted as guns fall silent

The ceasefire was three minutes old when the two Land Rovers, one RUC, one Army, drove past the shopping centre. James, who was just nipping in to buy two cans of beer, waved his arm in the direction of the disappearing vehicles. "Just think of how much money is spent on all that lot," he said. "Wouldn't it be great if we could use some of that money for the ordinary people who live here? We don't just want peace - we want results."

Business was building up at the Kennedy Way shopping centre, just off the Falls Road; peace or not there was shopping to be done as the minutes ticked towards the noon threshold. "You still have to buy food for the family, ceasefire or not," said Martine Owens, 26, as she hurried towards Curleys supermarket. "Life and shopping go on. But I think there is more hope this time among the ordinary people that this ceasefire might last."

The truce came as a holiday bonus for Lily and her 14-year-old daughter, Nicola, who arrived back in the city on Saturday night from a trip to Bulgaria. "We only found out at the last minute and it's a good feeling," said Lily. "But it's too early to say how long it might last."

A middle-aged man called Ken, out shopping in the overwhelmingly Catholic Kennedy centre, remarked on the lack of visible celebration compared with the 1994 truce. "Last time they were blowing car horns up and down the Falls Road. I think this time we are just holding our breath."

Even at a nearby Sinn Féin rally, organised to call for the release of Republican prisoners and to herald the start of the new IRA cessation, there was little overt celebration save for the odd toot on the horn from passing motorists. Appropriately for a Sunday, much of the public reaction came during church services.

The leaders of the two main churches, Church of Ireland primate Archbishop Robin Eames and the Catholic primate, Arch-

Belfast holds its breath, hoping that this time the truce is for real, writes Michael Streeter

bishop Sean Brady, each lent their support to the calls for peace. Archbishop Eames declared: "Opportunities now present themselves for a building of trust, and I pray that under God we can move forward."

His Catholic counterpart said: "Now the task is to build the trust required to enable the peace, which many desire, to become a reality."

At Clonard monastery in the Falls, Father Gerry Reynolds, the man credited with helping to broker the last ceasefire, and possibly this one, called the news a "very welcome feast day gift" on the Feast of The Holy Redemption.

Pastor Walter Entwistle, in a sermon at Ballygomartin Baptist church, close to the peace line dividing Catholics and Protestants in West Belfast, said prayers for the future and said people "hoped for peace". But David Prentice, a senior congregation member, feared any peace would be short lived. "The foundations are not right. While enmity lasts between Protestants and the Roman Catholics there will always be wars."

One hundred yards away, William Humphrey, 29, had just come from a service at the Ballygomartin Presbyterian Church when more prayers were offered. He welcomed the ceasefire but thought - like many Protestants - that it was an IRA ploy after being out-maneuvred by Orangemen over the 12 July marches, and was simply a bid to get Sinn Féin into peace talks. "Why wait until now to call a ceasefire? Gerry Adams doesn't have to ask for a ceasefire, he can order one."

Georgina McIlwaine, an 85-year-old Protestant living alone in a largely Catholic area, had more practical matters on her

mind. She said: "Maybe now we old folk will feel able to go out at night. At the moment we are like prisoners in our homes."

In Lurgan, a special service was held in memory of Bernadette Martin, the 18-year-old Catholic girl shot dead last week at her Protestant boyfriend's home, in a murder which shocked even the most cynical and world-weary in the province.

The relentless use of violence in Northern Ireland was underlined just a few hours before yesterday's truce, when a 17-year-old Catholic youth was shot in both legs in a nationalist area of Belfast, in what police said was a "paramilitary-style punishment attack".

A human rights group later claimed that punishment beatings were the forgotten story of the last ceasefire. Nancy Gracy of Outcry said that such attacks by Republicans had risen during the 1994 ceasefire. "They got more vicious as well. It was during that time we had a young boy crucified. Another boy had spikes put through his legs," she said.



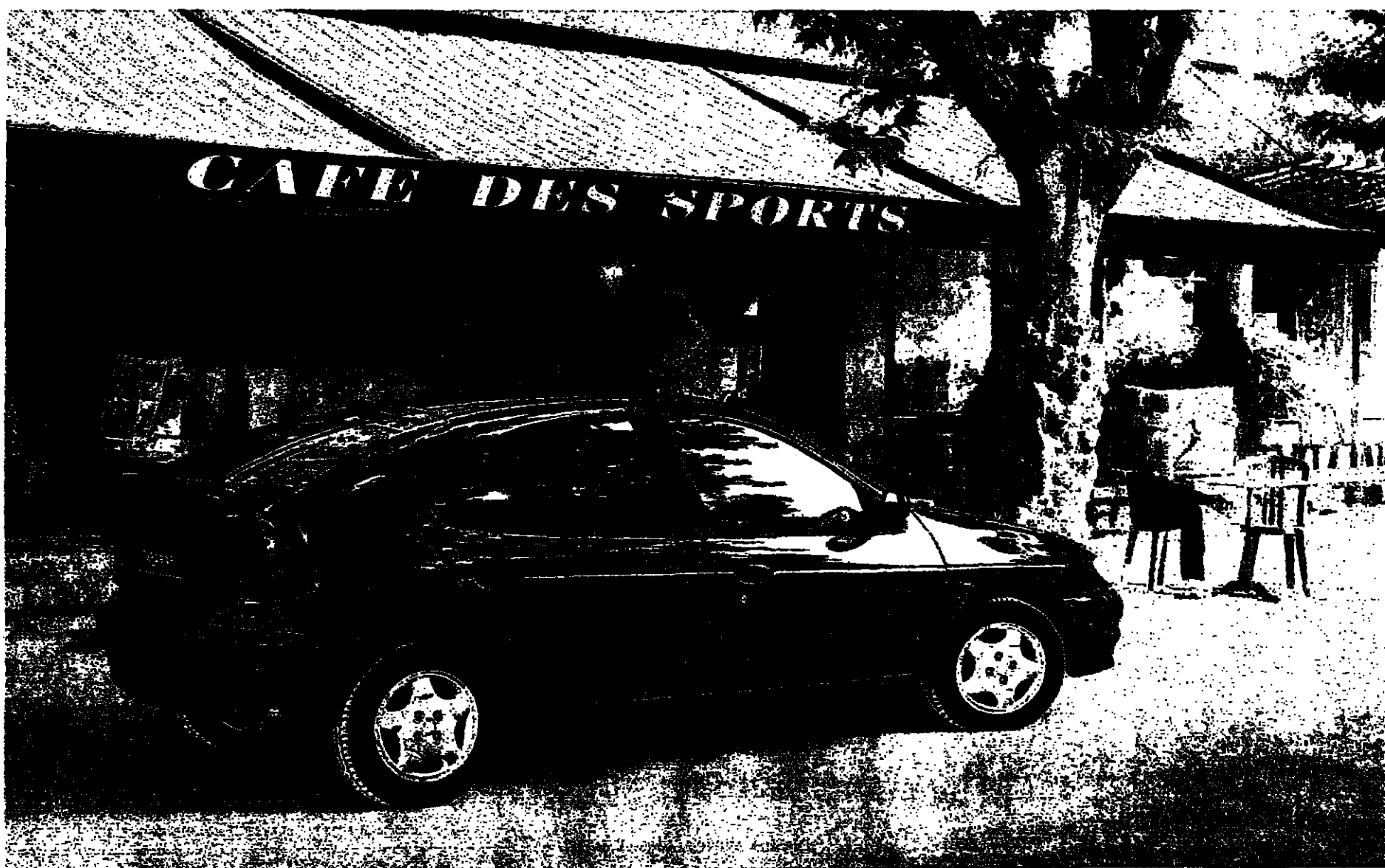
Landmark day: A rally against the British presence in Ulster outside Woodbourne barracks in Belfast minutes after the ceasefire began. Photograph: Brian Hanrahan



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Deadlines on talks timetable

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The timetable for peace in Northern Ireland was set by the Irish and British governments in their joint statement on 25 June, this year.

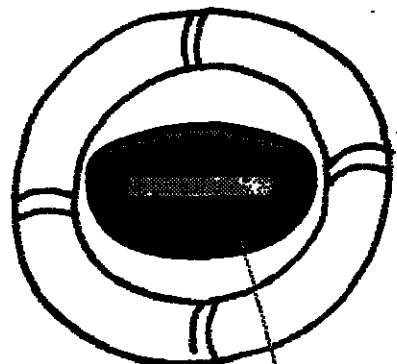
The first deadline it set was that the business of the opening plenary, under former United States senator George Mitchell, including the launch of the three-stranded negotiations should be completed "not later than the end of July".

The parties agreed to meet on Wednesday this week and to adjourn again for the summer holidays until 15 September - the first meeting of the "substantive talks" to which Sinn Féin will be invited, following the restoration of the IRA ceasefire. To gain seats at the negotiating table, Sinn Féin will have to sign up to the Mitchell principles, which Tony Blair said on 25 June included "not only the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations and the renunciation of force or the threat of force but also action to prevent so-called punishment killings and beatings".

The Government may seek to hold more meetings if Wednesday's meeting leads to a crisis in the talks, with the Unionists voting down the Government's proposals for decommissioning terrorist weapons.

To reassure the Unionists, the chairman of the decommissioning body will be announced by the end of July. He is expected to be John de Chastelain, the former chief of the Canadian defence forces. The members of the body will be appointed in August, to start work in September before the first substantive cross-party talks. Their aim is to have decommissioning plans ready to begin in parallel with the talks.

The key deadline is May 1998 - the month set by the two governments for ending the substantive talks and for putting the proposals on the future of Northern Ireland to the people in referendums north and south. But the timetable is littered with obstacles. The Unionists, if they agree to join the talks with Sinn Féin, want an early start to the decommissioning of weapons, with arms being handed over during the talks process.



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news

Larger than life – even in death

Louise Jury

In death, as in life, Sir James Goldsmith was remarkable. Few men could reasonably expect both mistress and wife to be at their side at the end. His were.

Lady Annabel Goldsmith, the wife, sat alongside Laure Boulay de la Meurthe, the Frenchwoman with whom Sir James had lived in recent years, as the billionaire financier and Referendum Party founder passed away in Spain in the bed he was born in 64 years ago. Both women are expected to share in his estimated £1.5bn fortune – as will the rest of the Goldsmith dynasty.

A larger-than-life man, Sir James Goldsmith produced a larger-than-life family of eight children by four women, an arrangement as idiosyncratic as his business and political interests.

His first great love was Isabel Patino, a Bolivian heiress with whom he eloped to international front-page-headline scandal. But she died giving birth to his first child 43 years ago. Their daughter, Isabel, so named after her late mother, flew from her home in Mexico to be with her father last week.

In 1958, Sir James went on to marry his former secretary, Ginette Lery, who bore him two more children, Alex and Manes. But within six years he had wooed Lady Annabel, the then wife of Mayfair club owner Mark Birley – who non the less stayed friends with both.

Sir James and Lady Annabel wed in 1978 and have three children: Zachariah – who is widely expected to take over his remaining business interests – and Benjamin.

But within months of the marriage, Sir James began an affair with Laure Boulay de la Meurthe, editor of a French magazine. "When a man marries his mistress he creates a job vacancy," he once famously remarked.

She shared his life until he died, bearing him a further two children, Charlotte and Jethro, and – intriguingly – living in the other half of the Paris mansion which was also home to his second wife, Ginette Lery and her family.

Sir James's brother, Teddy, a well-respected environmentalist, described Sir James as a "natural tribal polygamist".

Yesterday, none of the fam-



King Midas: Sir James Goldsmith conducted his personal life in a similarly controversial manner to his business affairs

Photograph: Alistair Miller

An ancient therapy to ease the pain

A dying man seeks comfort where he can. In Sir James Goldsmith's case, comfort came in the shape of an Indian practitioner of the ancient holistic therapy of Ayurvedic medicine.

At his farmhouse in the hills outside Marbella, the unidentified practitioner is reported to have prescribed a special diet, backed by exercises and massage, with treatments based on 1,500 herbs, minerals and metals.

Sir James's conventional doctors may well have encouraged him in the treatment, knowing that there was nothing more modern medicine could do for him. Pancreatic cancer is one of the most rapidly fatal of all cancers, the average playwrite Dennis Potter died of it in chemotherapy less than a year after diagnosis.

Ayurvedic medicine is based on the notion that body and mind must be kept in balance by adjusting the three strengths of the three humours: Vata (air), Pitta (fire), and Kapha (earth).

These three humours are said to be the basis of all diseases, and a balance of them is essential for good health. The practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine is said to be a master of the art of balancing the three humours.

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Sir James's niece, Clio, Teddy's daughter, is married to Mark Shand, the brother of Camilla Parker Bowles, yet Sir James, like Gemma, was a friend of the Princess of Wales. He successfully juggled business, politics, friends and family.

Whatever arrangements Sir James made for his families with their five homes in four countries, it is hard to imagine the shrewd business operator having left anything about their future financial security to chance.

Patrick Robertson, the founder of the Euro-sceptic Bruges Group who became Sir James's personal spokesman, said that everything about his affairs had been in order for a very long time – "permanently in order". Sir James Goldsmith never did anything by halves.

Attempt to halt tobacco funding

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A leading cancer charity is to mount a campaign to prevent tobacco companies gaining respectability by supporting research.

The Cancer Research Campaign, which gives £47m of scientific grants a year, has said it will not give funds to organisations that accept money from the tobacco industry.

The charity has drawn up a draft code of practice that would require organisations accepting its grants to guarantee they would not take tobacco cash. Professor Gordon McVie, the charity's director-general, said he hoped other grant-giving bodies would join the move to squeeze the tobacco companies out.

He said: "I feel the momentum is in the right direction. We have got to use our influence in as wide a fashion as possible to ensure others will follow."

The charity declared its intention to ban grant recipients from accepting tobacco cash last year after it emerged that Cambridge University, which receives around £2m from the campaign, had accepted a donation of £1.5m from British American Tobacco to establish a chair in international relations. Professor McVie said then that he was "bitterly disappointed" at the university's decision.

An unanswered question is how widely the prohibition would apply. Professor McVie said the target departments would be biology, medicine and biochemistry, but he hoped this list would grow. Some universities were already "clean" of tobacco money, such as Nottingham, but others, such as Bristol, were built on it.

A spokesman for the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association said the industry had a long history of sponsorship which was not dependent on commercial advantage. "If you are making profits from selling a legitimate product and want to give something back to the community you should be allowed to do so. It is sad that some people with a special interest want to deny others the benefit of that generosity," he said.

Labour fudges promised attack on lottery profits

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The National Lottery White Paper today is expected to fudge the pledge on which Labour fought the election to pass the running of the lottery to a non-profit making company when the contract expires in 2001.

While still paying lip service to the idea of removing the profit, Whitehall insiders said the White Paper would allow flexibility for financial incentives on top of the fee for running the lottery.

Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, has had difficulty in defining "non-profit-making", but the compromise is expected to satisfy Camelot, who could win the bid for a new contract when it comes up for renewal after seven years. In spite of criticism of six-figure bonuses for the company directors.

Mr Smith will announce that the money to be raised by 2001 will be more than £10bn, over £1bn more than the previous target.

Officials believe the extra money from the mid-week lottery will answer criticism that the additional needs of education, health and the environment will rob millennium schemes across the country.

The Treasury will also publish a memorandum announcing a split in the role of the regulator for the lottery, to hand the job of selecting the winner of the contract to a new independent body. That will answer criticism that there was a conflict of interests over the regulator's dual role when it was awarded to Camelot.

Mr Smith has privately told officials he is impressed with the efficiency shown by Camelot, in spite of the row about bonus payments, which forced the di-

rectors to agree to make voluntary donations to charity.

Camelot has been fighting a rearguard action since it was leaked in *Marketing Week* that total payments to Camelot's 10 executives and non-executive directors soared by two-fifths from £1.67m to £2.32m as contributions to good causes fell by £143m. Camelot used the courts to try to identify the "mole", and defended the bonuses on the grounds that they were one-off three-year roll-over payments.

Camelot privately threatened to pull out of bidding for the new contract if it denied incentives to increase the good causes income. However, the consortium – Cadbury Schweppes, Racal and De La Rue, ICL and Gtech – will be favourite for the contract because of its expertise and computer system. Richard Branson's Virgin company has dropped out of the running.

Ministers reassure middle-class parents over cost of university

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

The Government moved yesterday to reassure middle class parents they would not pay more towards their children's higher education under plans to bring in means-tested tuition fees and abolish what remains of student grants in favour of loans.

Graduates on lower incomes would also get a better deal than at present, government sources insisted, despite the fact that they would have to repay all rather than only part of their living costs to the state.

On Wednesday, education and employment secretary David Blunkett will announce proposals to charge students up to £1,000 a year for university tuition, repayable after graduation. The precise sum would depend on their parents' income, but those whose families earned £34,000 per year or more would repay the full amount, while those from poor backgrounds – with a family wage below £16,000 – would be exempt from repayments.

The move would be expected to alarm better-off parents, who already have to contribute up to £2,100 a year towards maintenance costs for children at university. However, government sources yesterday said that students from wealthier families would have access to a full £1,000 a year loan to offset the cost of tuition fees, although their parents would still have to pay towards living costs.

Government plans for a means-tested tuition fee and the abolition of maintenance grants even for students from poor families run contrary to the preferred option spelt out by Sir Ron Dearing's committee of inquiry into higher education, due to report on Wednesday.

The committee proposes charging a flat-rate of £1,000-a-year for tuition repayable after graduation by all students, but recommends continuing the government contribution to-

wards living costs to protect students from poorer backgrounds.

Under the government's plans, students from the wealthiest families will finish university facing loan repayments of £3,000 for tuition, plus any money they have borrowed to top up their parents' contributions towards maintenance.

Those from the poorest backgrounds will have no bills for tuition, but will have to repay at least £7,500 in maintenance loans. However, government sources suggested the terms of the state-subsidised, income-contingent loans would be such that a graduate earning under £19,000 would get a better repayment deal than those paying back existing, much smaller maintenance loans.

Universities yesterday welcomed the Government's response to the Dearing recommendations. Diana Warwick, chief executive of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, said: "It looks both as if the Government recognises the problem and as if money will start flowing quite quickly."

However, the National Union of Students reiterated its opposition to any form of tuition fees, claiming their introduction would leave the door open for hefty fees later.

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Stone supply threatens Cotswolds' chocolate-box charm



Country life: A shortage of limestone has made it difficult for Cotswold council to enforce the use of traditional building materials

Photograph: John Beldom

Louise Jury

The distinctive appearance of Cotswold stone has contributed to the charm of West Country life for centuries.

But now a shortage of the Jurassic limestone is causing headaches for conservation officers eager to preserve chocolate-box villages from the worst excesses of modern building.

As the 15 quarries in the Cotswolds work flat out to meet demand, the larger, more efficient quarries of France are stepping in to bridge the gap in supplies.

Woodchester Manor, a grade-one listed building near Stroud, is being restored with stone from Burgundy because of the shortages.

Yet the problem has also forced Cotswold district council to water down its policy of encouraging the use of natural materials. Country landowners claim they cannot afford the British stone which is expensive because of labour-intensive quarrying.

Tony Jones, the council's head of planning, said natural stone slates for roofing were in particularly short supply. The authority has had talks with quarry operators in a bid to re-open some old sites and encourage new production. "We wanted to encourage the use of more natural stone, but there was quite a lobby from people like the Country Landowners Association about the cost so we've slightly relaxed our policy."

"There are situations where we will accept reconstructed material. But it's a vicious circle. If we allow reconstructed materials, demand for natural stone goes down and production ceases."

Cotswold stone was important in preserving the heritage of the area including traditional stonemasonry, he added.

"Cotswold stone is part of the local tradition and local character of the area which is a designated area of outstanding natural beauty. The harmonious use of natural materials is part of what tourists come to see."

The Brockhill quarry of the Cotswold Stone Quarries company near Bourton-on-the-Water is the last remaining producer of Cotswold stone in the area.

A spokesman said demand was exceeding supply at present and builders were having to wait up to eight weeks for delivery. The council is helping the company to find new sites for quarrying to ease the problem.

"All the quarries are pretty busy," he said. The stone from France was a softer stone but still good quality and cheaper than Cotswold stone because the French had larger, more modern quarries.

"The stone industry in Britain is so ancient and inefficient. France has jumped on the bandwagon. But Cotswold district council have to strike a compromise between getting stone available and letting people dig up the landscape."

Rich profit from law's poor policy

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

A two-tier legal system has been established in which the rich are free to commit multi-million pound "white collar" fraud and corruption while the police concentrate on catching the poor, according to a report published today.

Law enforcers and politicians are turning a blind eye to white-collar crimes largely because they are considered "victimless" and are being carried out by wealthy people, says the study, entitled *Poverty, Crime and Punishment*.

The author, Dee Cook, Associate Dean of the University of Wolverhampton, says that white-collar crime includes corporate crime, fraud, embezzlement and "fiddling" at work.

She says scandals such as the fraud case involving Nick Leeson and Barings Bank, BCCI, Robert Maxwell and Barlow Clowes, indicate the vast sums involved in corporate fraud, yet only a tiny number of people are brought to justice.

The report, published by the Child Poverty Action Group, also gives the official response to tax fraud and benefit fraud as an example of double standards. It says that people involved in cheating the Department of Social Security are far more likely to end up in court even though the cost of their crime is much less than the white collar offences.

More than £6bn in unpaid tax was recovered in the year ending April 1995, yet only 357 peo-

ple were prosecuted - of which just nine were for tax evasion - compared with 9,546 fraud cases mounted by the DSS. Most of these cases involved small amounts of money and saved an estimated £650m.

The report concludes: "When we compare the policing and investigation of tax evasion with that of social security fraud we have evidence of 'one law for the rich, another for the poor'."

The police are far more likely to target "street" crimes where there is an obvious victim, such as mugging, but more reluctant to spend large resources on apparently victimless offences such as insider dealing, claims the study.

The report argues: "The very language associated with huge financial frauds is managerial, low key and not censorious."

Among the examples given of recent white-collar crimes are: ■ The £12bn to £15bn estimated to have been lost in the massive fraud uncovered in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) in 1991.

■ Barings of Britain lost £265m on Japanese futures trading by Nick Leeson in 1995.

■ NatWest Markets lost £89m on mis-priced European interest rate options, which was made public early this year.

Dee Cook concludes: "In an increasingly divided society there has been an intensified policing and punishment of poorer individuals and communities. The poor are filtered into the criminal justice system while the rich are filtered out."

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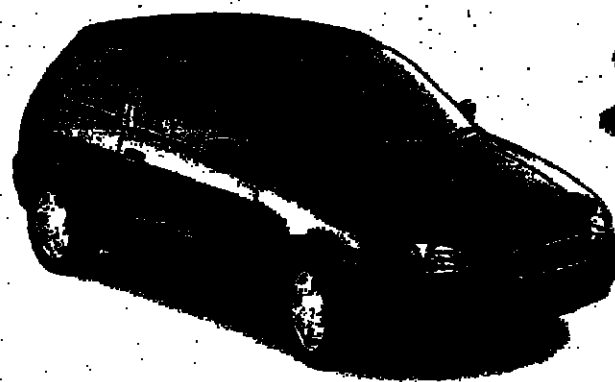
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news



Armchair anglers: Members of the British Float Tubing Association yesterday fishing for the first time on Rutland Water, Leicestershire, Britain's largest man-made reservoir

Photograph: Philip Meech

Doctors admit helping terminal patients to die

Jeremy Lawrence
Health Editor

The fragile consensus within the medical profession that mercy-killing is wrong burst apart yesterday as two doctors publicly declared that they had helped patients to die.

The British Medical Association (BMA) called for an investigation into the activities of Dr Michael Irwin, a former medical director of the United Nations and the World Bank, who was reported to have ended the lives of at least 50 terminally ill patients. Dr Irwin, who is also chairman of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society, said he was speaking out because the time had come to confront the issue of euthanasia.

He said he had helped two patients die in the past six months, one by prescribing 20 times the normal dose of a sedative, then placing a large plastic "cushion" bag with an adhesive neck seal over the patient's head. "The bag is big enough so it doesn't get sucked on to the face. You then wait until they have stopped breathing or the body starts to go cold. They feel no discomfort and just gradually use up the oxygen," he said.

His stand was backed by Dr David Moor, a GP from Newcastle upon Tyne, who said he had helped two patients to die in the past week by giving them lethal doses of morphine.

"I went to their homes, assessed the patients and decided they were in pain, anguish and distress. I then discussed giving a lethal overdose with relatives, they agreed it was the best thing to do, and I gave the injection."

He said he would not personally use a plastic bag to suffocate patients but insisted this was a humane way to die. "I aggressively support what Dr Irwin is doing. It would be morally wrong if he were arrested. I invite people against euthanasia to join me and witness the pain, anguish and distress, not only for the dying patient but also for the relatives. Then and only then can they have the temerity to come to me and argue the case against euthanasia."

The British Medical Association said Dr Irwin had clearly broken the law and would have to face the consequences in the courts and before the General Medical Council, the doctors' disciplinary body. "It is effectively an execution," the association said.

Dr Vivienne Nathanson, Head of Science at the BMA, said that rather than finding new ways to kill patients, doctors should be seeking better ways to control their symptoms so they could face their final weeks with peace of mind. "Vulnerable people with a terminal illness should be able to turn to their doctor in trust without fearing that the doctor could put pressure on them to end their lives."

Dr Moor's position is less clear-cut because it is acceptable to give as large a dose of morphine to a dying patient as is necessary to relieve their pain, even if that means hastening death. The key principle is that the intention should be to relieve suffering, not to kill.

Signs of tension within the profession over euthanasia emerged at the BMA's annual meeting earlier this month. Doctors voted overwhelmingly to oppose moves to legalise euthanasia but agreed by a narrow majority to include the words "for the time being", signalling their intention to return to the issue in the future.

Blair tells Scots to go it alone

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Tony Blair is to launch the campaign for Scottish devolution this week with a pledge to campaign for a "double yes" vote for a Scottish parliament with tax-raising powers.

The Prime Minister will launch the Scottish "vote yes" campaign in the foreword to the

Scottish devolution White Paper to be published on Thursday, in which he promises a "new Scotland in a new Britain".

The White Paper will make it clear that sovereignty will stay with the Westminster Parliament, reinforcing the Government's denials that it will lead to the break-up of the Union. The Government has decided that there will be no bar on

the Scottish Parliament debating and voting for independence, but it does not expect this to happen.

The decision not to put a "glass ceiling" on the debates of the Scottish Parliament is expected to be enough to win the backing of the Scottish Nationalist Party for the "vote yes" campaign. However, the Government and leaders of the

SNP yesterday strongly denied any deal-making.

Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, said that this power would not be given to a Welsh Assembly. The devolution White Paper for Wales will be published tomorrow, accompanied by campaigning in favour of a "yes" vote. Mr Davies said on BBC Breakfast with Frost that he had opposed

devolution in 1979 but that circumstances had now changed.

"There is now a need to ensure that the power devolved to Cardiff and discharged by the Secretary of State is subject to a more direct control by the people of Wales through their own representatives," he said.

The "Wales says yes" campaign will be launched tomorrow with a celebrity reception

at Cardiff Castle hosted by Sian Lloyd, the ITV weather presenter, with Ryan Giggs, the Manchester United star, Colin Jackson, the Olympic hurdler, and the band Manic Street Preachers.

The "Just Say No" campaign is to be launched today in Wales and will be reinforced tomorrow by William Hague, the Conservative Party leader and for-

mer Secretary of State for Wales, as he opens his campaign against devolution at the Royal Welsh Show.

The Scots are expected to vote overwhelmingly in favour of devolution on 11 September, but the Government is anxious to ensure a "yes" vote in Wales on 18 September. Private Labour focus group sampling suggested that having the Welsh referendum after the Scottish vote "yes" could add 10 per cent to those in Wales voting for the new parliament.

The White Paper for Wales will propose: A 40 member assembly, to be elected every four years by first past the post, with 20 more from the five European Parliament seats in Wales; it will have no tax-raising powers but it will have responsibility for the £700 Welsh grant; the Assembly will elect a leader, with a 10-member executive, but the Secretary of State for Wales will remain in the Cabinet in London.

The White Paper for Scotland will propose: A 129-member Parliament, elected by first-past-the-post and additional member system; it will have tax-raising powers and the right to pass primary legislation, and autonomy over spending for most services. There will be a Chief Minister, elected by the Assembly, with a Cabinet, but the Secretary of State for Scotland will remain in the London cabinet.

Labour machine geared up for referendum

Tax and Europe, those thorniest of Westminster issues, will be the most prickly of thistles for the Government to grasp this week as it lays its Home Rule plans before the Scottish voters for a referendum on 11 September.

The other key challenges facing Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar and his devolution deputy, Henry McLeish, are, first, how to enthuse the electorate on such dry fiscal and constitutional matters in a campaign much of which coincides

Big mandate needed to push legislation through, writes Douglas Fraser

with summer holidays and, second, finding a Parliament in which to put 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament late next year.

Bickering is reported to have come to an end within the Cabinet over which parliament should legislate on such issues as abortion and embryo research; the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster, and the relatively favourable spending

formula for Scots. The status quo is expected to hold on all three, although a new English grouping of what might be called devo-sceptic ministers, emerged in the process, centred around Jack Straw, Frank Dobson and Jack Cunningham.

Watered down from allegedly being too "brave-hearted" much of Mr Dewar's plan is already well-known - having been based on the Scottish Consti-

tutional Convention plans - but key issues remain under wraps until Thursday, when the Scottish White Paper is published. Attention will focus on how to implement the election pledge to allow a 3p variation in the basic rate of income tax, and on what rights, if any, the Edinburgh administration will have to negotiate in Brussels on Scotland's behalf.

Questions are also yet to be

answered on: what role a Scottish secretary would play in a UK Cabinet in the long term; how potential, if not probable, disputes between the Westminster and Edinburgh Parliaments can be resolved and how much the new parliament, probably in a new building, will cost to set up and run.

But the most pressing question is how Mr Dewar can spark sufficient interest in Scotland to guarantee the kind of referendum turn-out he needs to keep the Home Rule momentum going in Westminster for a subsequent year of bruising legislation.

In addition to Labour's campaign, the Scotland Forward group, chaired by low-key Glasgow businessman Nigel Smith, represents Labour, the Liberal Democrats, union and pressure groups and aims to set up branches in all 72 Scottish constituencies.

One irony of cranking up tired campaigning machines north of the border is that many in Scotland never wanted a referendum. The device was sprung on the Scottish Labour Party by Tony Blair a year ago to protect what was perceived as a weak electoral flank. On 1 May, more than 80 per cent of Scots voters backed parties with home rule policies, including the Independents.

The referendum is not to test voter opinion again, nor to give them an option on independence, but to provide what ministers hope will be another thumping mandate with which to bludgeon the Bill through Westminster.

CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS OF PERHAM SECURITIES LIMITED (IN LIQUIDATION)

The Liquidator of Perham Securities Limited gives notice under the provisions of Rule 4.18a and Rule 11.2 of the Insolvency Rules 1986 that he intends to make a final dividend to the unsecured creditors of the company on or before 15th December 1997.

Creditors who have not already done so, must send details in writing, of any claim against the company, to the Liquidator, Perham Securities Ltd, 100, The Quadrant, 2nd Floor, 20 Kings Parade, Queens Dock, Liverpool L3 5JQ, by 15th August 1997, which is the last day for submitting claims. A creditor who does not make a claim by that date will not be included in the proposed final distribution.

Dated 16th July 1997.
Jonathan Glyn, Anthony Phillips, Liquidators.

CHARITY COMMISSION

Charity: The Commonwealth Trust Scheme for Power of Attorney.

Reference: PD1083157-40742.

The Charity Commissioners have made a Scheme for this Charity. A copy can be seen for the next month at the Commonwealth Collection, c/o J. B. Priestley Library, University of Bradford, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD1 1DP. Tel: 01274 353464, or a copy can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, 2nd Floor, 20 Kings Parade, Queens Dock, Liverpool L3 5JQ, quoting the reference above.

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Churchill ordered MI5 to spy on opinion poll

John Crossland

The Security Service spied on Mass Observation, the public opinion poll, in the run-up to D-Day on the orders of Winston Churchill, a top secret file opened this weekend at the Public Record Office, in Kew, reveals.

Churchill asked his link with MI5, Major Desmond Morton, if the wartime heads of Mass Observation could be prosecuted for a breach of the Official Secrets Act for asking in a vox pop poll where they thought the Allies would land in the invasion of Northern Europe.

It was, say MI5: "a moment of stupidity" which, although well-intentioned, provoked an outbreak of paranoia in the security services. They raided the offices of Mass Observation, seized the results of the research and destroyed them.

Only certain Cabinet members, Allied chiefs of staffs and senior intelligence officers were privy to the secret of the Normandy beach-head and it was feared that careless talk, filtered back from interviews conducted by the organisation's canvassers, might give the game away to the Germans.

Mass Observation was left by its founder, Tom Harrison, in the hands of his wife and second-in-command, Henry Wilcock,

when he was called up into the Special Operations Executive. In March 1944, just three months before what was to be D-Day, his researchers were asking people in the street to "describe in as much detail as possible your feelings about the second front. Include where you think we shall land, how soon you expect an opening of the second front, your fears and hopes focusing on the second front."

Churchill demanded of Major Morton in a memo of March 1944: "Who are the people behind Mass Observation? I presume the names and addresses of the 'observers' are known? I should have thought they were criminally liable."

Major Morton replied to the Prime Minister: "Mass Observation is an informal nuisance and potential danger. So far, however, the law officers of the Crown can find no means of bringing an action to suppress it. It is constantly watched by MI5. It is a business venture by someone on the lines of the Gallup Poll."

The file came as a complete surprise to Dorothy Sheridan, archivist of the new-look Mass Observation, which has been restarted at Sussex University with similar objectives to the late Tom Harrison's organisation. "We are no longer regarded as being dangerous subversives,

although we did put out a questionnaire about the Gulf War," she said. "Currently we are trying to get a picture of national attitudes to the health service. For all I know, MI5 may still be watching us, but I somehow think they will be disappointed."

DAILY POEM

Arabic Script

By Anthony Thwaite

Like a spider through ink, someone says, mocking: see it blurred on the news-sheets or in neon lights
And it suggests an infinitely plastic, feminine
Syllabary, all the diacritical dots and dashes
Swimming together like a shoal of minnows,
Purposeful yet wayward, a wavering measure
Danced over meaning, obscuring vowels and breath.
But at Sidi Krebich, among the tombs,
Where skulls lodge in the cactus roots,
The pink claws breaking headstone, cornerstone,
Each fleshy tip thrusting to reach the light,
Each spine a hispid needle, you see the stern
Edge of the language, Kufic, like a scimitar
Curved in a lash, a flash of consonance
Such as swung out of Medina that day
On the long flog west, across ruins and floccid colonials,
A swirl of black flags, white crescents, a language of swords.

This week's daily poems celebrate 40 years of work by Anthony Thwaite and are taken from his *Selected Poems 1956-1996*, just published (price £8.95) by Enitharmon Press at 36 St George's Avenue, London N7 0HD. Anthony Thwaite published his first collection, *Home Truths*, in 1957; "Arabic Script" was first published in *The Stones of Emptiness* (1967).

World Wide Web: Less-developed countries are seeing Internet's potential more readily than the British



Screen queen: Her Majesty has been receiving tuition from the Duke of Edinburgh

Photomontage: Mark Hayman

Palestinians find a state in cyberspace

Stephanie Nolen
Ramallah

There are two things Joharrah Tabhou loves best about the Internet: one is to "surf the Web" and find out about the world outside her home town of Ramallah. The other is to get into on-line dialogues with Israelis.

"I've never talked to Israelis, except soldiers," confided the 17-year-old Palestinian perched in front of the computer screen. "It's fascinating to find out what they think. And when I'm on-line with an Israeli in Tel Aviv or wherever, they can't believe that I'm in Ramallah - they want to know everything about it."

Ms Tabhou surfs the Web at KSM, the first and only Internet café in the West Bank. It was opened two months ago by Major Totah, an affable United States-trained engineer who came home to manage the family restaurant. He had the idea while browsing the Web for recipes: he hooked up with Internet cafés around the world, and thought, if ever there was an audience for such a venture, it was among Palestinians.

"People here feel hemmed in and they crave this connection to the outside world," he explained. "Plus, every Palestinian family has one member in

Top addresses

Palestinian sites to visit:
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org
http://www.palestine.org

America or Kuwait or something far away... This is a great way for people to keep in touch.

During the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, communication was a serious problem for Palestinians. There was a waiting list of about nine years for a telephone line. In 1989, Israel outlawed the sending of faxes and electronic mail on Palestinian phone lines. And after the 1993 peace accord, matters did not improve. The Israeli phone company refuses to service the autonomous West Bank cities, but the nascent Palestinian Telecommunications Co is gearing up to meet the demand.

Similarly, it was always difficult for Palestinians to get permission to travel from the West Bank or Gaza. In 1993, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza, requiring Palestinians to get permits to get out of the ter-

ritories. With the major West Bank towns now under the control of the Palestinian Authority (PA), many are even more cut off. But for some, the Internet offers a way across the borders.

"We have access to the whole Arab world now," enthuses health researcher Ibrahim Deides. "There is all kinds of information from Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt... it's a matter of minutes, and we are communicating with people."

PA ministers now have on-line staff meetings, because workers can rarely get permits from Israel to travel between the West Bank and Gaza. Many businesses are doing the same, while West Bank universities are beginning to offer on-line courses for students stuck in Gaza.

There are 81 Palestinian World Wide Web sites - newspapers, human rights organisations, businesses, universities, medicine, technology and something called *markaba* (hello), a big virtual yearbook.

As Palestinians grow increasingly wary of the dictatorial practices of the PA, the Internet has brought a new freedom. None of the local Arabic press dares to report incidents of torture by the PA police, but the news is posted on the sites of a half-dozen local human

rights organisations. When journalist Daoud Kuttab was arrested by the PA recently, twice-daily updates about his imprisonment and hunger strike were sent out on the Internet.

There has been no reaction from Israel, or indeed the PA, which can be none too happy about the criticisms of its rule that go out on the Internet - and it is certainly aware of the power of the medium. The PA has several Web sites of its own, reportedly created after President Yasser Arafat was impressed by the homepage of the Israeli ministry of foreign affairs.

The PA sites include that famous flag, a homage to "Jerusalem, Our Capital". The Web sites of Birzeit University in the West Bank, on the other hand, offer a vast array of information about the current state of life in the Palestinian territories. During clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian stone-throwers in April, the site had more than 7,000 visitors.

"Palestinians have always believed that if people knew what was happening here... things would be different," said Marwan Tarazi, who is in charge of information technology at the university. "Once, we were completely isolated out here. But not any more."

The Queen gives Net surfers a royal wave

Steve Boggan

The Queen has long been a keen anorak-wearer but few would have guessed she strolled through the Balmoral heather that her love of unfashionable coats signified anything deeper than a dislike of the cold.

Yesterday, however, a possible new meaning was revealed - the Queen is a member of the computer nerd fraternity and has become a keen surfer across the Internet.

According to the *Sunday Times*, Her Majesty has been receiving tuition from the Duke of Edinburgh, who has been a keen computer buff for some time. For the past two years, the newspaper said, the Queen has

Monarchist view

Web sites for the dedicated Royals fan:
http://www.royal.gov.uk (the official site)
http://www.royalnetwork.com (for the latest news and gossip about Princess Diana and /clubdi on the end)
http://www.buckinghamgate.com

had access to an internal e-mail system at Buckingham Palace, but recently, after being hooked up to the Internet, she is using the system to "go surfing with chums in high places."

The image of the Queen spending hours chatting to subjects across the Commonwealth, browsing the sports pages and linking up with "highly placed

confidantes around the country" was an irresistible one. However, according to the Palace, the Queen isn't a surfer and she really does wear her anorak to keep warm.

"The Queen is aware of what the Internet is," said a spokeswoman, "but I really don't think she goes surfing on it."

The nearest she has come to browsing the web is sending messages on it during royal visits. In Canada last month, she sent an e-mail during one event to a royal-visit website set up by the Canadian government. Unfortunately, her involvement in sending the message may reveal the true extent of her computer literacy.

"She sort of pressed a button and off it went," said the spokeswoman.

There are two kinds of Russian: on line or out of Dickens

Phil Reeves
Moscow

Happily, I am not one of those visitors to Russia who have been asked by their hosts to drink a toast to Stalin or Beria, although they say it occasionally happens in the mustier crevices of this huge country. But I can claim to have drunk to the health of an autocrat which will one day govern us all.

More than a year has elapsed since my friend Oleg first promised to invite me to try a dish he learned to cook during a posting to Central Asia. When the day finally came, the food was a pretext for an event of much greater significance: we had been summoned to celebrate a new arrival in the household, a Toshiba laptop computer.

"Isn't it beautiful," said an enraptured Oleg, as a little rashly, I thought he passed the device round the table for us to admire. We raised our glasses of Armenian cognac and Georgian wine and toasted technology. Sure, it had cost all his savings, and his summer holiday to boot. But for a couple of thousand dollars, Oleg had stepped out of one class and into another.

The former Soviet Union is fracturing into two camps. There are the minority who are abreast of the new era of information exchange. And there are the rest, who know only a Dickensian world peopled by clerks and accountants and paper-clip carriers, each one armed with a warning ballpoint pen, time to waste, an ill temper, and a platoon of deputies who do even less than they.

The question is: which side will ultimately prevail? Russians show little of the snobbery

with which the British greeted the personal computer. Even now that the sneering has ebbed, and the intelligentsia has resigned itself to the inevitable I still feel the need to preface every computer-related conversation with Britons by saying (truthfully) that, of course, I wouldn't know one end of a floppy disk from another. I'm no nerd; God forbid. But in Russia no apology is required.

Only a small minority have the money to enter the information age, but they have done so with zeal. Russian newspapers can be read on the Internet. Executives - at least in cosmopolitan Moscow - have electronic mail. When I visited a local paper in the semi-desert far northern mining

Sites to seek

Russian Internet sites worth visiting:
http://www.izvestia.ru
http://www.russiatoday.com
http://www.rian.ru

town of Vorkuta last year, I was amazed to find computers, complete with software that automatically translates Russian into English (the result, predictably, being gibberish). The know-how is here, sure enough; yet so is a deep-rooted institutional reluctance to apply it in a manner that really changes the way the country functions.

Take, for example, a group of unpaid striking teachers in Rostov. Last month, they sent out a message for help on the Internet. Before long, they received instructions from another school about how to sue the city administration. Then a French *Académie* picked up the trail and asked the French embassy

in Moscow for help. The embassy began to pressure the local bosses, who eventually raised a loan to pay the wages. And yet the local authorities went on to ban the teachers from using the Internet for "political" disputes.

There is a wariness among Russians about replacing their tried-and-tested vetting systems with anything else. The other day, I checked into a hotel in St Petersburg. Behind the reception desk sat four women, each equipped with a computer. Yet I had to speak to each one before I was finally issued with a room key. You can find explanations for this - for example, many computers are not yet linked up by modems - but other factors lie at its root.

Every country suffers from an addiction to pen-pushing. The United States government can be atrocious, and the British are no slouches in this department either. But Russians are to red tape what the West Indians are to cricket: masters of the terrain. In our office, we have computers but none so powerful as our small yellow typewriter. Times have vastly changed since the Stalin era, when all typewriters had to be registered with the authorities and more ownership was regarded as subversive. (Even in the late Eighties obtaining Xeroxes in Russia required Herculean efforts and vetting by the KGB.) But the typewriter is still the key to reaching high places.

Such is its aura that Olga, our office manager, keeps it covered with a tea-towel, shrouded like a particularly valued icon. Only on this machine can you prepare a letter which will be deemed truly authentic in the wary eyes of officialdom. Computer printouts just do not pass muster.

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Hand of fate: Two of the Mexicans tricked into a life of servitude who were rescued by New York police from an apartment in Queens yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

Slaves of New York freed

David Osborne
New York

Deaf-mute Mexican immigrants traded freedom for US entry

The shining spire of the Chrysler Building under the midsummer sun tells one story of New York City – a metropolis levitating on the updraft of a surging economic boom. The written note of a deaf-mute Mexican woman delivered at 4 am on Saturday at the counter of a Queens police station tells another.

That there is more to this miasma of seven million souls than the suspender-boys on Wall Street with their million-dollar bonuses should not come as a shock. But in this note there was a punch that appals even the hardest of Gotham residents. Deep in Queens, so close to Manhattan in distance but so far in fortune, not just terrible poverty has been uncovered, but also extraordinary and inhuman enslavement.

"I am a woman who works at Newark Airport," the note began. It ended: "I hope you have time to read this."

It was read. By yesterday morning, seven people had been arrested on charges of smuggling 60 Mexican nationals into the United States, all of them deaf and many deaf-mute, and forcing them into a life of squalor and indentured servitude from which, until now, there had seemed no chance of escape.

The Mexicans, it seems, had been lured to New York with promises so

familiar to the millions who have made just the same journey: economic prosperity without horizons. Where they landed, however, was surely closer to a miserable hell than any dusty village they left behind.

These were the two dwellings to which police officers were led by the woman on Saturday morning. One was a three-bedroom apartment meant to accommodate a single family. Instead, police found it divided into cubicles and strewn with mattresses and sleeping bags. Inside, 44 of the Mexicans were living on top of one another. The remaining 18 were in another, similarly squalid, building nearby.

Their bargain with the smugglers was an unhappy one: each day they were forced to fan out across the city to hawk the charitable hearts of New Yorkers, mostly as they rode subway trains or entered airports, by distributing cards identifying themselves as deaf-mutes and then selling one-dollar trinkets, mostly key-rings with little globes, or fake \$100 bills.

Each night, according to police, the adults – the several children remained each day in the apartments – would return to Queens to hand over their earnings to their masters. No one was allowed back to the apartments until they had collected at least \$100.

Some have additionally complained of consistent physical and sexual abuse.

"This is a very disgusting and horrible situation that is going to emerge over the next few days," said an indignant Rudy Giuliani, the Mayor of New York. "One man or more was holding a number of people in bondage or virtual slavery."

Similar cases of immigrants trading their freedom for help in penetrating the United States have surfaced before in New York, though previously they have almost always involved Chinese. This is the first such case where the nationals are all Mexicans. It is also the first time where the exploitation appears all the more grievous because the victims are also handicapped.

Anniversaries of evil in a war without end

Sri Lankan military bogged down in bid to end 14 years of ethnic slaughter

Peter Popham
Vavuniya

If Velupillai Prabhakaran, the commander of the Tamil Tigers and the most feared guerrilla leader in Southern Asia, wanted to take the Sri Lankan army totally off-guard, he could do worse than recruit a few foreigners to set off his bombs. That was the idle thought going through my mind as I was waved through one army road-block after another on the route north from Colombo to Vavuniya, the scruffy little garrison town that is the front line in Sri Lanka's endless war.

North of Vavuniya is the territory stubbornly held by Mr Prabhakaran's fanatical army, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). And it was only at the northern edge of the town, where government-held land blurs off into no man's land strewn with "Johnny mines", the anti-personnel devices invented by Mr Prabhakaran himself, that I was obliged to turn around. "Very dangerous!" a gestulating soldier shouted at me. "LTTE everywhere!"

In December 1995 the principal city of the north, Jaffna, was captured from the Tigers by the Sri Lankan army, along with much of the surrounding countryside. Up to half a million of Jaffna's residents, made into refugees by the war, have since returned home. But Jaffna's link with the south is still in the hands of the Tigers, whose base is deep in the jungle of the north-east. Today the only ways of getting to Jaffna are by the government's frighteningly ill-maintained military aircraft, or by ships which are frequently attacked by the Sea Tigers, Mr Prabhakaran's marine arm. So the rehabilitation of Jaffna has yet to get properly under way. Accordingly, in May President Chandrika Kumaratunga ordered an offensive to capture the road all the way north.

But already the offensive has become bogged down, just a few kilometres north of Vavuniya. Two ferocious Tiger counter-attacks in June stopped the government forces

in their tracks. In Colombo now the folly of trying to defeat a guerrilla force by conventional means, and of trying to hold a narrow strip of land while guerrillas infest the countryside on both sides, is the small change of conversation.

Now that "Black July" has arrived, the government has been even more wary of exposing its troops to attack. July is studded with evil anniversaries here. While the beginning of inter-communal violence can be traced back to the early 70s, the critical escalation occurred on 23 July 1983, when the Sinhalese population erupted in violent attacks against Tamils, leaving hundreds dead and injured. Four years later, on 5 July 1987, an LTTE guerrilla drove a truck full of explosives into an army billet and blew it up, inaugurating the suicide tactic which culminated in 1991 in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Indian prime minister. It was in July, too – on 17 July 1996 – that the LTTE demonstrated their undiminished power, killing more than 1,300 government troops in the coastal town of Mullaitivu, in the north-east.

So far this month two MPs have been murdered. Yesterday police blamed the LTTE for the killing of an opposition politician and five other people, including a four-year-old boy, near the eastern town of Trincomalee. Mohammed Moharroof of the United National Party was visiting villages where the rebels had kidnapped fishermen in recent weeks. Another MP, Arunasalam Thangithurai of the Tamil United Liberation Front was killed in a grenade attack on 5 July.

Few can foresee an end to the war which consumes more than 20 per cent of the budget and has badly damaged the tourist industry, even though none of the most important resort areas has been affected in recent years.

With little serious threat to his jungle stronghold, and with a military machine that remains impressive, it is hard to see what could persuade Velupillai Prabhakaran to return to the negotiating table.

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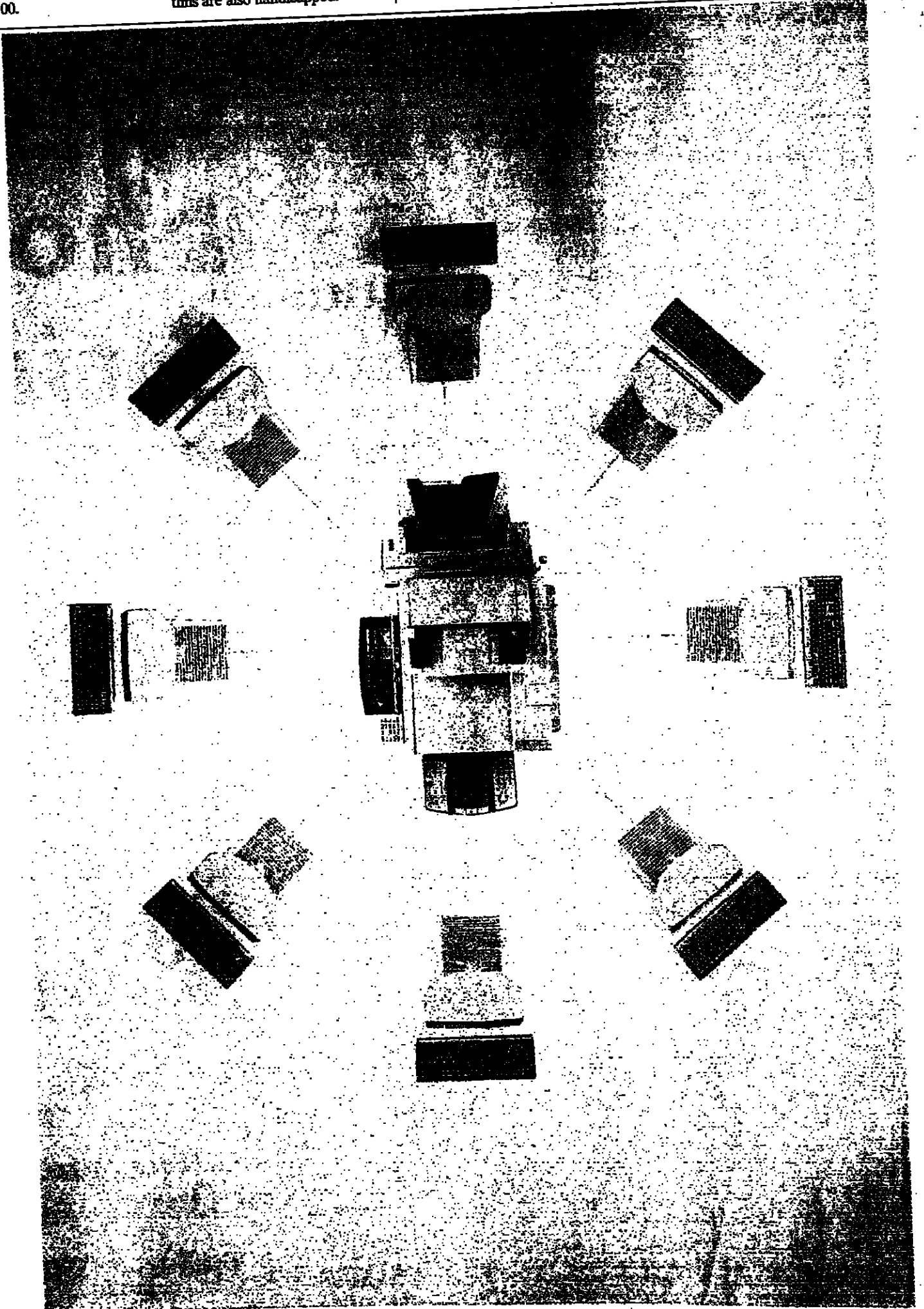
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Republican farce litters stage with bodies

John Carlin
Washington

Cassius appealed to Brutus's nobility. Party plotters appealed to their seniors' self-interest

A disastrously failed coup attempt last week by the Republican leadership against their erstwhile colossus, Newt Gingrich, has invited inevitable comparisons in the press with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. "The Ides of July", read one *New York Times* headline. "Et tu, Bill?" another.

The "Bill" in this particular drama is not President Clinton but Bill Paxon, a senior Republican congressman who emerged as the disidents' choice to replace Mr Gingrich as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The way the plot has unfolded, however, bears less resemblance to *Julius Caesar* than to *Up Pompeii*

(with Frankie Howard playing Newt Gingrich) or *Whoopi Goldberg's Broadway hit... A funny thing happened on the way to the forum*.

Barely two years ago Mr Gingrich bestrode the political world. Mr Clinton was reduced to bleating that the presidency was relevant as the Speaker of the House - half Patton, half pop star - thundered that the second American revolution had come, that Washington politics would change forever.

The very same troops who idolised him then, who would break into primal howls of "Newt! Newt! Newt!" at the very sight of the loved and feared Alpha Male, are the ones

who have been plotting his downfall. It was the Freshman Class of '94, the year the Republicans routed the Democrats in the House, who brewed up the coup two weeks ago and then boldly invited the three most senior Republican congressmen to join them.

Dick Army, the House Majority leader, Tom de Lay and Bill Paxon decided to accept the invitation - but not because they had any intention of going along with the fell scheme. They would meet the conspirators as double agents, the mission to find out their secret plans.

But, as the story has leaked out, the longer the Big Three listened to the young subversives, the more beguiled

they became by their schemes. Shakespeare's Cassius appealed to Brutus' nobility. The Republican plotters appealed to their seniors' self-interest. When Mr Gingrich fell Mr Army - or perhaps Mr Paxon - would be handed the Speaker's crown.

By the time the meeting ended the elders were all sharpening their knives. Gingrich, they chose abruptly to convince themselves, was a liability to the party. He was the most high profile Republican of them all but he also happened to be the one the voters most disliked. He had also lost his fire. The revolutionary, tempered by the fire of battle, had become a moderate, a Clinton

appeaser. Under his pragmatic leadership the party had lost its soul. No one knew any more what the Republicans stood for.

Thus did the honourable Mr Army rationalise his betrayal. Until, that is, it emerged that not he but Mr Paxon had emerged as the people's favourite. It was Mr Paxon who would be installed as Speaker.

Whereupon Mr Army did what he believed he would do at the beginning - he went to Mr Gingrich and ratted on the plotters. As did Mr de Lay, who also, upon further deliberation, perceived no great personal gain in the fall of Caesar.

The conspiracy was revealed; the

wrathful Mr Gingrich rallied his supporters and Mr Paxon was left with no option but to fall on his sword, which he did on Thursday when he resigned from his post as chairman of the House leadership.

Mr Army indignantly denied accusations from within that for a period of "15 to 30 hours", as one Gingrich loyalist put it, he had been sharpening his knife for the kill. "I fully support Gingrich and had nothing to do with this," Mr Army declared.

The word is, however, that Mr Gingrich is not blind to the fact that translated from weasel Washington English into plain English the meaning of Mr Army's words would be,

"I wanted to bring him down but my courage failed when I realised there was nothing in it for me."

The betting among Washington observers is that the farce still has a few acts left to run. What is the political future of Mr Army, whose ineptitude has left him in a position where the Speaker views him with distrust and the young Turks he betrayed are baying for his blood? Will Mr Paxon make a come back? And what of Mr Gingrich himself? Has he the energy, courage and support to withstand another coup attempt?

The one certainty is that so long as Mr Gingrich remains centre stage the Republican follies will continue to provide great merriment. But the funniest thing of all is that no one is laughing harder than President Clinton.

significant shorts

Bosnian Serb hardliners expel president

Bosnian Serb hardliners, waging a battle for power, have expelled President Biljana Plavic from their ruling party and demanded she step down from office, a party official said. The ultra-nationalist Serb Democratic Party (SDS), which rules Bosnia's Serb entity, is run by hardliners loyal to former president and indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic.

Reuters - Pale

Curser of Rabin jailed

A right-wing extremist was sentenced yesterday to four months in jail for placing a curse of death on the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin two weeks before his assassination in November 1995. Avigdor Eskin was convicted in May for incitement to violence because he performed the death wish in front of television cameras.

Eskin and others performed a "pulis denura" ceremony outside Rabin's home in Tel Aviv. A pulis denura is a Jewish mystical curse which calls for the death of a deserving person.

AP - Jerusalem

Close race in Liberian election

Liberians who flocked to vote in elections to end seven years of civil war waited to see whether Charles Taylor, the man who started the conflict, would win power through the ballot box. The count, which began by candlelight, pointed to an unexpectedly close race between Mr Taylor and his main rival, former UN Development Programme Africa director, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Ten other candidates took part.

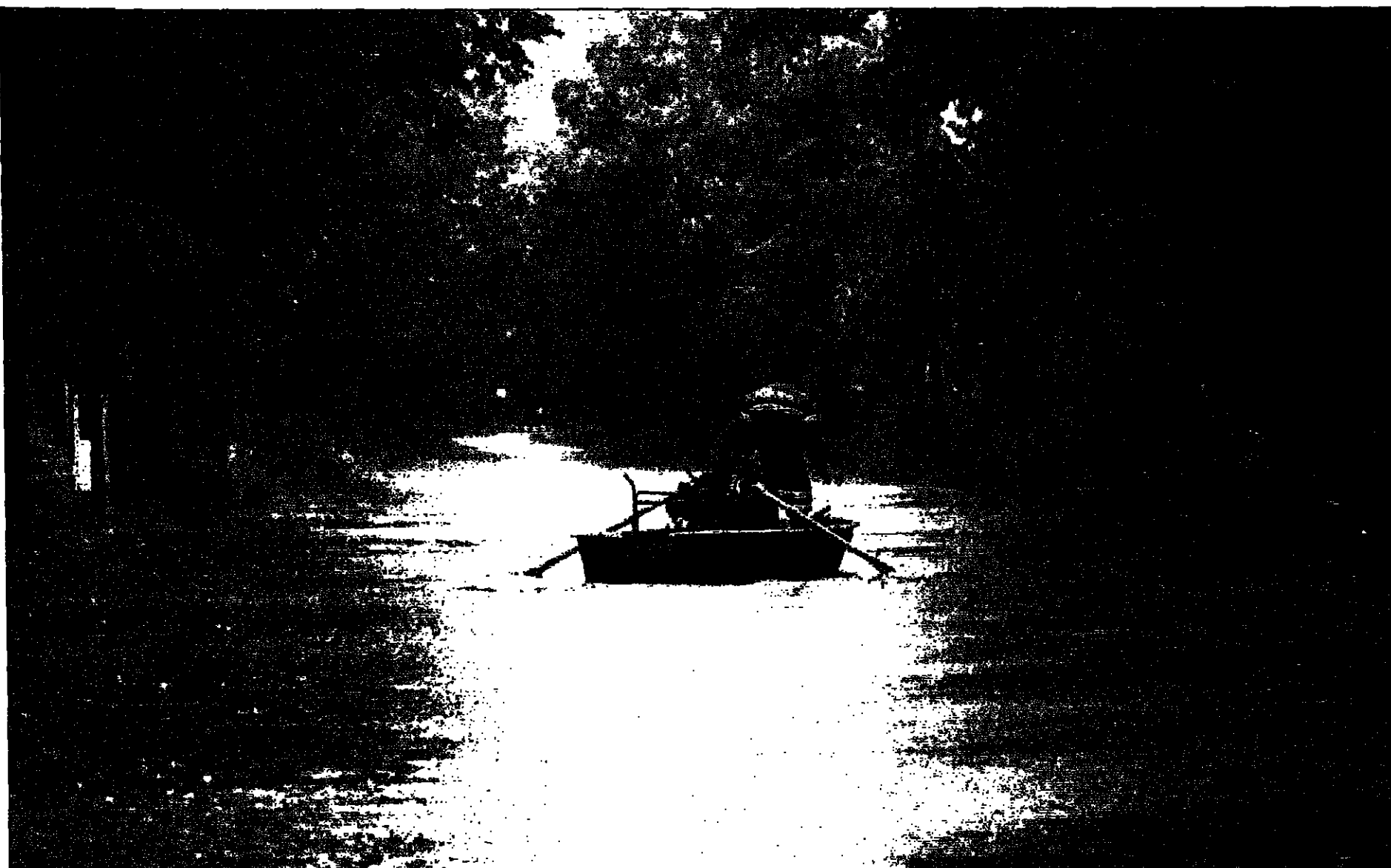
Reuters - Monrovia

Mir spacewalk disappointment

The British-born astronaut Michael Foale expressed disappointment that he will not be able to take part in a tricky spacewalk to restore power to Russia's damaged Mir space station.

Russian mission control has decided that the complex repair mission should wait a few weeks until a fresh team arrives on the station, taking some pressure off Mr Foale and his two worn-out Russian crewmates.

AP - Moscow



Wet work: Rescuers paddle along a road in Frankfurt an der Oder, on the Polish border, as the river reached its highest level for 50 years, raising fears that dykes could burst. The flooding is part of the deluge that has wreaked havoc in Poland and the Czech Republic. In Bavaria, potholes were rescued from caves out off by flood waters. Photograph: Reuters

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arts



Out of the madness, music

For three years, the Czech composer Pavel Haas was part of a creative powerhouse that helped sustain the inmates of the Terezin ghetto. Robert Cowan visited the former transit camp and met the man who is bringing Haas and other 'degenerate' musicians back from the grave

Every time I visit Prague, I discover yet another beautiful area that I never knew existed... Record producer Michael Haas's words echo my own delight in this most picturesque of European cities. Haas escorts me from the brightly coloured, fairy-tale architecture of the Old Town Square to the more austere State Opera House nearby. We are about to hear the third and final concert performance of the opera *Sarlatan* (The Charlatan), the story of a travelling quack who operates on his one-time enemy, the monk Jochimus, and succumbs to paranoia. Decca is recording the opera for future release as part of its "Entartete Musik" (or "Degenerate Music") series, in which composer-victims of totalitarianism, and Nazism in particular, are resurrected for a new generation of listeners.

Sarlatan is the work of the Brno-born Czech composer Pavel Haas (no relation), who was sent to his death in Auschwitz in October 1944 after experiencing a surreal spot of creative respite in the Terezin ghetto-transit camp, some 60km north of Prague's city centre. Only hours before seeing his opera, I had been in Terezin myself, treading the weed-littered pathways of an 18th-century fortress town that was originally built by the Emperor Josef II in honour of his mother, the Empress Maria Theresa (hence its German name of Theresienstadt), and that is laid out with cruel irony, given its later function as a six-pointed star.

The drive from Prague, initially over cobbled streets, had taken us past rolling

hills, an old monastery, a sugar factory and rotting, tumbledown bungalows. There were no road-signs to show us the way to the camp - until, just a few kilometres short of our destination, a stark hoarding to our immediate right announced "Terezin - Muzeum Ghetto".

The site itself is now dominated by a tall wooden cross and a crown of thorns, with 2,386 gravestones leading down towards a prominent Star of David perched on a mound of skull-like stones. The ghetto site nearby is a pretty, baroque-style garrison town, but the "small fortress" - where 10,000 or more inmates died - is blatantly a place of terror.

Beyond the grassy mote and entrance gate, the second archway pledges the all-too-familiar "Arbeit Macht Frei". There is a guards' office, where elegant net curtains (now filthy) still hang at the windows, and a "show shaving room", where Gestapo officials impressed a Red Cross delegation with rows of taps, mirrors and sinks (now netted with hairline cracks). In reality, none of the taps were ever connected to the mains supply.

Memories of Wilde's *Happy Prince* were prompted by a trapped swallow hammering helplessly at the upper door-frame of the hospital block where, over 50 years ago, hundreds died of typhoid. There are the torture cells, a Kafka-esque underground passage (half-a-mile long) that leads to the "gate of death", the place of execution and the mortuary. The gallows are still standing, a tunnel nearby leads to mass graves, and only the sky remains unscathed - save for the terror that one's imagination brings to it. Terezin's last pris-

oners left in August 1945, part of a savaged human legacy that was eventually dispersed among 39 separate countries.

By contrast, the ghetto town itself was host to an astonishing burst of artistic creativity, something that the Nazis were eager to exploit for propaganda purposes (they even made it the subject of a film, *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* - "The Führer Gives the Jews a Place to Live"). The "small fortress" museum houses a number of remarkable pencil sketches made at the time, many of which astound with their acute sensitivity to detail and human expression. Then there was *Brundibar* (Bumble-bee), a children's opera by Haas's compatriot Hans Krasa, performed in the camp itself by a cast that was constantly replenished as its young stars were systematically despatched to the gas chambers. Both Krasa and Haas entered Terezin in 1941, and both travelled to their deaths in Auschwitz on the same October day three years later.

Sarlatan itself dates from the late 1930s and has a decidedly Czech flavour: bright, tuneful and vividly atmospheric, sometimes reminiscent of Haas's teacher, Leoš Janáček, sometimes of Křenek, even Hindemith. Though modestly attended, the Prague performance was enthusiastically received and the conductor, Israel Yinnon, visibly grateful for such a genuinely appreciative response. Yinnon, who is Israeli-born and now in his mid-forties, is tirelessly energetic. Some two hours after conducting *Sarlatan*, he walked from the

State Opera to my hotel; he didn't actually reach me until well after midnight, and yet he was still eager to talk.

His first significant conducting engagements were in Germany, mostly with leading radio orchestras. "It is very hard for an Israeli to go to Germany," he tells me. "Some weeks after I arrived there, I started to think things out more deeply. My father's mother was shot in front of his eyes: he was just nine at the time. My mother was actually born in Israel, but when the Italians bombed Tel Aviv - in 1943, I believe - her father was killed. For him, even being in Israel couldn't protect him from the Nazis." Before Yinnon left Israel, he met Ruth Elias, who, years earlier, had survived one of Josef Mengele's hideous medical experiments. "She had been in Auschwitz," Yinnon explains, "and had decided to speak out about these things - although people at the time thought she was crazy and that she ought to shut up. She said to me, 'Why go to Germany?' And I answered, with some embarrassment, that I wanted to start my career there. Then she told me about Krasa's *Brundibar* and later put me in contact with Sister Veronika in a Freiburg convent, who supplied me with a tape of the work and a starting-point for further research." Yinnon notes that German music-lovers have an unavoidable "complex" about the Terezin composers - and I understand why. There is a conflict with the past; then they have conflicts with me, and with themselves - it is all very

complicated. But I refuse to judge them. It will take at least another two generations for things to change."

Producer Michael Haas adds that the Germans have, in the past, shown a certain scepticism towards the "Entartete Musik" project as a whole. "They have tended to think that, if the music had been any good, they would already have known about it," he explains. "But then Berthold Goldschmidt's work made them think again, while Braunfels' *Die Vögel* (a masterly operatic version of Aristophanes' *The Birds* recently issued as part of the series) marked another step forward."

As to Yinnon, further discoveries soon followed *Brundibar* and so did recording commitments, initially for Koch International (for whom he has recorded music by Terezin composer Viktor Ullmann, creator of the camp's best-known musical memorial, the opera *The Emperor of Atlantis*), and now for Decca. "Michael Haas said to me, 'Israel, suggest something good.' He trusts me a lot, which makes things harder for me. But I have to tell you that he made the decision to record *Sarlatan* in two minutes! I had already recorded the orchestral suite (for Koch) and when I played it to him, he looked at me and said, 'This is a masterpiece, we must record it.'"

It's interesting that Yinnon thinks of the work as more "Czech" than specifically "Jewish". He observes a telling contrast between the Czech-inflected *Sarlatan* and the recently revived *Brundibar* in a Decca (also due for a Decca release) by Haas's Terezin companion, Hans Krasa, a Jew who belonged to the German minority in

Czechoslovakia and who actually wrote his text in German. Yinnon gave the German text in German. He also prepared the piano score. But his current range of interests extends beyond the ghettoed borders of "Entartete Musik" to contemporaneous works by non-Jewish Germans. "If I want to put this 'forbidden' music into its proper context," he says, "I also have to present other composers from the same period. Viewed as a group, you might find that one composer emigrated, another stayed behind and a third was murdered by the Nazis. And yet all had something to say and, most important of all, we don't know their music." He talks of Heinz Tiessen and Eduard Erdmann in glowing terms, singing extracts from their works ("Erdmann's First Symphony is big music with six horns - a bit like Strauss") and enthusiastically protesting Tiessen's apparent stylistic leap "from Strauss to Bartók".

Yinnon has studied music theory and composition, but exactly when did he embark on his conducting career? He shrugs, then waves me to silence. "It is a secret," he says. "I have told no one... but I will admit it to you. Tell me what you think should I confess that I have been a conductor for only six years? I started in my mid-thirties, and that's very late. I had played accordion in a folk-band, worked for a psychological institute in the Israeli army, worked in a bank, guarded children in a boarding house..." No need to explain further. I'd watched him in action, heard his records, learnt some of his views, and there can be little doubt that few conductors on the current circuit are better qualified to serve what is, in a sense, the lost generation of 20th-century composers.

The road to recovery (left to right): the composer Pavel Haas (drawing by Peter Men); the concert hall in Magdeburg Barracks (drawing by Bethish Fitts); Terezin camp (APG)

Traditional virtually dictates that the Proms should open with a grand choral work. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* is one of the grandest of them all. It's also one of the strangest. Earnest, fugal writing, or nearly formal "amens", can suddenly be broken up by wild fanfares or strange, dislocating harmonic progressions. The intense war and peace drama of the concluding *Agnus Dei* (martial trumpets and drums and pleading soprano solo) comes to an oddly formal, almost perfunctory close: a kind of full-orchestral "That's all folks!" The chorus is stretched to the limits again and again, as it is in the Ninth Symphony - only here the endurance (test lasts nearly an hour and a half, not just 20 minutes).

In terms of endurance, Friday's First Night performers were well up to the task. The BBC Symphony Chorus were technically as solid as ever - wonderfully clear, precise entries, firm ensemble, minimal strain in the stratospheric heights of the Gloria and Credo. Apart from a badly fluffed trumpet entry in the *Agnus Dei*, the BBC Symphony Orchestra also stayed the course well. The solo team was excellently balanced, individually strong, and soprano Karita Mattila was the equal to anything Beethoven could hurl at her; she then managed to sound miraculously polished and pure in the testing Benedictus solo, a good three quarters of the way through the work. Conductor Bernard Haitink's control never wavered. He obviously sees this hugely diverse work as a whole. The long movements evolved with symphonic

Proms 1997



FIRST NIGHT

Missa Solemnis
Royal Albert Hall,
London

grandeur, and details all made sense. Interesting, too, to hear the violas playing with minimal vibrato in the Sanctus and Benedictus introductions - so, even this normally conservative conductor can bend a little towards those subversive period instrumentalists. Intellectual conviction, technical security, interesting details - all to the good of course, but was it really enough? On the first page of the score, Beethoven wrote what amounts to a brief prayer: "From the heart, may it go to the heart!" The heart, for one, remained untouched. It's not enough to be impressed by the *Missa Solemnis*. A really successful performance - like Roger Norrington's, also in the Albert



Bernard Haitink in rehearsal for 'Missa Solemnis' Photo: Tony Buckingham

Hall, two years ago - can be startling, disturbing, exhilarating, deeply touching, however well you think you know the score. Take those fanfares in the *Agnus Dei*. These shouldn't just be colourful or theatrical effects. In the right performance they can sound like Beethoven reliving the trauma of the Napoleonic bombardment of Vienna. The BBCSO's superb timpanist, John Chimes, threw himself into this with all his customary spirit and skill; in comparison the trumpets and horns seemed simply to go through the motions. Karita Mattila's response, "Give us peace", was strong and secure, but hardly anguished. The earth failed to move: the tingle-o-motor hardly twitched.

The final climax was perhaps the biggest disappointment of the evening. Other great moments were more effective, and there were lovely touches: for example, the flowing string and woodwind scales, like clouds of incense, in the surprise quiet ending of the Credo. Have I been too hard? There's an opportunity to test your reactions against the mine this afternoon at 2.10pm when Radio 3 runs a repeat broadcast of the First Night - part of a new series of repeats that will cover just over half the Proms in this season. Listen, if you can, and judge for yourself.

Proms to 13 Sept. Booking: 0171-589 8322

Stephen Johnson

If you think "Walk On By" is just a pop song then you should hear it get the full Isaac Hayes treatment. OK, so Dionne Warwick's 1964 recording was, without doubt, a benchmark performance, and the Strangers turned it round pretty well with their version 14 years later. What Hayes does, though, is make you forget that a song has a beginning, a middle and an end. Instead, he allows the composition to kind of slowly infuse. After all, there's plenty of time, so why hurry? As the man himself might say with a shrug "It's all right, we've got all night." At his Forum appearance, the process took around 16 minutes. Isaac Hayes sat relaxed at the piano while the grey with the electric guitar took centre stage and produced some sexual, languid sounds to set the tone. A full orchestral backing band hovered behind, waiting, as the guitar gently thrusted and surged, until finally becoming a spent force. Only then did the deep soul voice at last feel ready to sing.

"If you see me walking down the street," he began "and I start to cry, each time that we meet, walk on by." Simple words, but the master of emotion did more than just entreat you to walk on by. He begged and implored you as well, over

POP

Isaac Hayes
Forum,
London



A lifetime thing: soul man Isaac Hayes, still bringin' joy

and over, until his supplication became almost too much to bear. Yes, he'd got it real bad. By this time the other musicians and backing singers had further developed the motif, with the song eventually culminating in a duel between the drummer and the percussionist. At the end, there was just

Isaac Hayes, sitting still at his piano, smiling. The legend looked cool in dark glasses and leopard-skin shirt, and the notes he played were exquisite as cut glass.

Unfortunately, the orchestra wasn't a real one. It was all done with banks of synthesizers operated by keyboard wizards. There were no strings and no horn section, which some members of the audience found a little disappointing. True, the joint was jumping by the time they'd worked through "Joy" and "Do Your Thing", but maybe it was a little too far from Memphis, where Isaac Hayes began all those years ago.

He told a plaintive story about being a young musician in the days of segregation. How the band was separated from the audience by a railing. How he could sing "My Funny Valentine" for a girl in the crowd but never actually get to meet her. Even today, when he sang that song, he thought of her. These memories were interrupted by some insistent percussion driven by a guitarist's wah-wah pedal. The multiple keyboards intervened and here was "Theme from Shaft" in all its glory. A reminder that Isaac Hayes is still very much where it's at.

Magnus Mills

Tomorrow in the Tabloid

Frances Spalding on 100 years of the Tate Gallery

Friday 25 July 7.30pm

Sarod Maestro
Amjad Ali Khan in concert

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Golden Jubilee of India's Independence
Amjad Ali Khan came to India at an early age, studying under the great masters. He has performed all over the world and is now one of the leading sarod players in the world.

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First there was the book. Then there was the film, which shot Hayley Mills to golden-ringlet stardom. And now there is the musical. In fact, now there are the musicals, although Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Up the Wind* has faded from view after going belly up in America's hinterland before it could reach the bright lights of Broadway. However, four years after it was premiered by the National Youth Music Theatre, Richard Taylor's *Whistle Down the Wind* gets its professional debut in Cheltenham.

The story concerns three children in a Lancashire village who, upon discovering a man in their barn, conclude that he is Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, a murderer has escaped from a nearby jail. So the man is: a) the Messiah, b) the errant son, or - if you

MUSICAL

Whistle Down the Wind
Everyman, Cheltenham

want to be really tricky - c) both? By 'eck, it's a mystery. Adapting this story for the stage presents one obvious challenge. The vast majority of the cast - three leads and a host of others - need to be children. This is quite a burden to lay on pre-pubescent shoulders. One option is to slip an adult ringer into the gruelling lead part of Cathy, and in this production, Rebecca Rainsford's appearance and performance as a 12-year-old are utterly convincing, contradicted only by her rather more

mature photograph in the programme. However, the remainder are all genuine roller-blade-loving juveniles, and luckily the Everyman seems to have found a bottomless supply of very fine child actors indeed. They cope well with the script - the music, on the other hand, is quite a different matter. Taylor clearly shares Stephen Sondheim's well-publicised abhorrence for "humdrum" melodies, and so incorporates the post-atonal jumps and clashes which proclaim that this

is "serious music". The show is packed with numbers that might easily have come from the less melodic parts of Sondheim's oeuvre (although I fear they lack Sondheim's cleverness). Unfortunately, this constitutes a challenge which is - quite understandably - rather beyond the capabilities of the young performers (they're only 10, for heaven's sake!), resulting in substantially more bum notes than one would hope to hear in a professional production. For the sake of fairness, it should be noted that the adults fare little better, suggesting that the score may be unusable: something of a handicap in a musical.

It is hard to tell at whom this show is aimed. Although it is a show with children, it is not necessarily a show for children. The action level is quite

high, but there's little here to set young hearts racing or Junior Hush Puppies tapping. Meanwhile adults, while able to marvel pleasantly at how well the little darlings act, are offered little more than clumsy allegory and a story which, although it made a nice, atmospheric little movie, may be too insubstantial to survive being enlarged on to the broad canvas of the musical stage. Emerging into the cool night air, it is not the unhumable tunes that fill the brain. Nor is it the deeper ponderings of faith and belief. Instead, it is a question: how did they find a flock of under-10s in bijou Cheltenham who can rattle off such convincing Lancashire accents? Now there's a mystery. Booking: 01242 572573

Toby O'Connor Morse

Miles away from This Life



Interview

Deborah Ross
talks to
JACK DAVENPORT

Jack Davenport – which is who he is in real life, as opposed to Miles, which is who he is in *This Life* – opens the door to his basement flat wearing a dressing gown. Blue, it is, with red stripes. Or perhaps it is lime with orange stripes. Certainly, it is one or the other, I'd bet my life on it. Certainly, it is quite short, too. He has super legs. "Better get dressed," he says. "Don't bother on my account," I say. Because things like this are quite a treat when you get to my age. "No, better had," he says. "Really, it isn't necessary." I entreat. "I'd still better." And then he dashes off. A bit of a blow this, as you can imagine. Super legs, as I said. Anyway, I'm left in the living room with Egg. Yes, Egg's heret No. of course it isn't actually Egg. It's the actor who plays Egg in *This Life*, but I'm blown if I can think of his name. So I go. "Hello Egg?" And Egg, who is sitting on the edge of the sofa, doing up his boots, says: "Stayed the night because my flat's got the builder's in. Must be off." And off he goes, before I get a chance to ask him why he's called Egg or why he puts up with Milly, who is such an uptight, dreary thing, or anything like that. This is a bit of blow, too. I had a lot to talk about with Egg. I might even have offered to help him out in his café. I've been told my Angel Delight is second to none.

Anyway, a few words here, I think, about *This Life*, because if you've never seen it, all this will be meaningless, and you might even be confusing it with *Thel's Life*, which was something very different, featuring as it did a mad woman in low-cut chiffon going on about amusing menu misprints and suggestive-looking parsnips. No, *This Life* is a series about a group of ex-law students who share a house somewhere in London. There's Miles and Anna, both barristers, and Milly, a solicitor, and Egg, who has given up law to run the aforementioned café, and Ferdie, a motorbike courier, who got mixed up in all this somewhere. The first series ambled along quite nicely but now, in the midst of the second series (Thursdays and Saturdays, BBC2), it has really taken off. True, *ER* and *Animal Hospital* are off for the summer while *Friends* has come back as rubbish, so there's not exactly a lot to watch on the telly at present. But I don't think this is the entire reason. The thing about *This Life* is that it is good, and more and more people are cottoning on to that. The scripts are sharp, the acting is sharp, the characters are sharp. As Jack says, "When I first got sent a script I thought, this is so fresh and good. I was gagging to do it. It was very exciting from the off." When Jack re-enters, he is wearing a white T-shirt and grey baggy trousers. He is very handsome and 24. What's the first film you ever remember seeing, Jack? I later ask him. "Star Wars," he replies. "My father fell asleep and snored next to me. I never forgave him because it was my birthday. He claimed it just couldn't hold his interest." *Star Wars!* That only came out last week, surely. God, I am so horribly old.

The house actually belongs to his mother, the actress Maria Aitken, who is popularly referred to as "the socialite actress Maria Aitken", which makes him laugh because, as he says, "I see her slopping about in her tracksuit." Jack has the basement. Maria and Jack's stepfather, the novelist Patrick McGrath, have the rest of it. Jack's actual father is Nigel Davenport, the actor who was married to Maria for seven years but best remembered for his Sir Edward Elgar – the one who had the hots with Jan Howard – in *Howard's Way*. The series (which, if I recall rightly, also starred Kate O'Mara and an underwired bra) went out when Jack was 13. No, it wasn't embarrassing, he says. It was great. "I used to go down to where they were shooting. It was a good laugh, messing about on the boats." He is very close to his mother – "an absolute darling" – and his father – "a sweet old thing". But what, I naturally wonder, does he make of his uncle, Maria's brother, Jonathan Aitken. He's not a sweet old thing, surely. "It has," he says, "been a very difficult time for the family. In many ways, one's concerns are with his children and my grandmother (Lady Aitken). Whatever difficulties he is in, which I guess are of his own making, my heart goes out to him because he is my uncle. One can only be sympathetic. Things will work out as they work out." Is Jack a Tory? "Ah, no. But the fact Jonathan is is immaterial. I don't see that as a reason to judge a member of one's family. Who cares about his political beliefs? They don't define him."

His family, he says, are well-chuffed with his success. And they watch *This Life*? Absolutely. "They love it." Miles is a great character to play, he continues, because while he's a shit he's not just a shit. "He's a half monster and half misunderstood." OK, he's a regressed, pompous, narcissist. He is always betraying someone or other to advance his own interests. But he has enough tenderness and self-knowledge also to be complicated and clever and attractive. Very attractive, in fact. Certainly, he does OK on the women front. He is meant to be engaged to Francesca, the clothes buyer, but just the other week he gave Anna (with whom he is actually in love, if you ask me) a seeing-to on a sofa while Francesca was asleep upstairs. Good fun for Miles, obviously, but

not so much fun for Jack, as it turns out. "I've done hundreds of sex scenes now, and they're never fun. You're naked in a room full of people. As far as erotic experiences go, it is up there with being mugged." Although, that said, "it's even less fun when you aren't wearing clothes and you are on your own. I think I had to do a hideous scene in the bathroom looking at my bottom while singing a Smiths song, which in many ways was even more embarrassing." Did he practice it at home at all? "Ah, no. That one I didn't practice." This is his first main acting part. He has been fantastically lucky, he says. He has never even done Rada or any of that stuff. He never even wanted to be an actor, frankly, because his parents always told him an actor's life was pretty crap. Too hard, they said. Too insecure. He just kind of fell into it, he continues, after finishing his film degree at university and writing to John Cleese to ask if he could be a runner on his next film. John passed his letter on to the casting department. The next thing he knows he's being called up to audition for *Fierce Creatures*, and is cast as a zoo keeper. Of course, his parents being who they are probably had a hand in it. But who cares? Jack's a good actor, from what I've seen.

The early part of Jack's childhood was wonderful, wholly idyllic, he says. There was a house in Ibiza plus a smallholding in Suffolk. His mother was never an absentee one. She commuted to the National from Suffolk. He was an only child, but never lonely.

The house was always stuffed to the gills with unemployed actors who would come for the weekend and stay for the month. And my grandmother lived there. And there was loads of room to play. And actors are generally good with kids anyway because they are all so bloomin' childish themselves and I was always the centre of attention, which was nice, and allowed to run wild, which was fantastic." Maria and Nigel aspired to self-sufficiency "in that latent, Seventies, hippyish way" but it never really came off. They would plough the fields and scatter, "but then no one tended the fields sufficiently". His mother couldn't bear sending the animals off to slaughter. "She'd cry as the turkeys were being stuffed in their cages. But they're only turkeys, I would say. The pigs I could understand. You could get very affectionate about pigs. I remember when the sows gave birth at 4am my dad would stagger in splattered in blood and say, 'There were nine of them. Just the one runt.' It was always a terrible wrench when the pigs went."

His parents split when he was seven. Why they did is their business, he says. Yes, he was sad about it, but not devastated. "I was at primary school when it started and I'm ashamed to say I milked it a bit. The teachers had been told and I did a certain amount of sniffing over a cup of tea in the staff room because it would get me out of a maths test. Terribly shallow thing to admit to, I know, but kids can be quite manipulative at an early age." Perhaps he was just an actor from early on, I suggest. "Or a complete toser," he suggests. Yes, possibly. But I don't think so. Mostly, he seems a very understanding and loving sort of person. With super legs.

As his parents hurtled towards their divorce, he was sent to The Dragon School, a boarding job in Oxford. He didn't mind, he says, because he trusted his parents and if they thought he was better off out of it, then he was. "There were some tricky times when my parents were splitting up and both of them, purely from



Davenport: I've done hundreds of sex scenes. As far as erotic experiences go, it is like being mugged

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

motives of love, thought it would be better if I wasn't there. I was very small and we are talking about very complex adult emotions. Being an only child, I had always been included, but at this point they felt it was time for me not to be. And they were right. Although in terms of going to boarding school, I actually think it was harder for my mother than anyone else. She was gutted. He is extremely close to his mother. "She is full of love and really good fun to be with. We are very similar at the deepest levels, emotionally. We don't do any of that 'I love you' and 'I love you, too' stuff because it's taken as a given. Once, when I was much younger, I asked her what she would do if I died. Nice question over breakfast. But she didn't miss a beat. She said: 'I'd just never get out of bed again.' And I thought, 'Right. Yes. OK. That's a good enough answer for me.' His mother has had her problems. She had an underactive thyroid and, before it was diagnosed, lost a great deal of weight. Jack can remember looking at her one day and bursting into tears, because she was so skeletal. Then there was the cocaine business, those charges of importing cocaine which were later dropped. This was mortifying for his mother, he says, but not especially for him. It helped him to grow up, he says. But, still, he was pleased when she met Patrick and he could pass her care over to someone else. So he felt responsible for her, then? Yes, he says, he always did.

After The Dragon School he went to Cheltenham College – "where there were girls in the sixth form, and we all went completely mad ... my god, there are people with breasts here" – because his father and father's father had been there, and then to the University of East Anglia where he studied film and English. He did do a bit of acting in his first year there, but wasn't terribly swept away by it. "You think, do I really want to

trudge to a church hall outside Norwich to rehearse a scene when I could be doing other things, like going out?" After the small part in *Fierce Creatures* he thought, yes, I like this acting lark, and got himself an agent, who put him up for *This Life*. He was desperate for the part of Miles, he says. He had to audition six times. After the sixth time, "I was turning into a complete pest, phoning the production office every hour to ask if there was any news". He was in his grandmother's garden when his agent finally phoned to say he'd got it. "Cue wild celebrations ...". He is now settled as an actor, he says. In fact, he must dash, because he has a rehearsal to go to. He's going to be Malcolm in a television version of *Macbeth*. Plus, his girlfriend has to get up for work. Sorry? His girlfriend, he says, is still in bed, and refuses to get up until after I've gone so "if you don't mind ...".

Actually, I don't mind. This isn't because Jack isn't nice or bright or anything. He is very much both. I like his living room, too, because there's an empty, upturned scotch bottle in the wastepaper basket and crumpled bag packets everywhere and lots of John Updike on the bookcase. It is very much my sort of living room as it happens. I could make myself at home here, I tell him at one point. I'd rather you didn't, his horrified look says. No, it's time to go because I imagine his girlfriend's first film was probably *Star Wars* too and she and Jack might want to discuss it and knowing me I will embarrass myself hideously by whining pathetically: "Are you sure, when you say *Star Wars*, you don't mean *The Wizard of Oz*?" God, I'm so horribly old. A taxi home, I think, then a bit of telly with a blanket over my knee before a snooze and perhaps a gorgeous dream about glorious boys in short dressing gowns who don't dart from the room the moment I enter it.

Full marks for empathy with historical figures

Annual reports have changed a lot since I was a child and teachers could get away with simply writing "Fair" (a slight euphemism in my case, as far as PE was concerned) in the space provided. These days teachers have to manage a skilful balancing act, ticking off national curriculum attainments while at the same time delivering a recognisable personal portrait of your child. Consequently the meaning can sometimes be difficult to extricate from the tangled semantics – should I be worried or pleased, for example, that my daughter can "empathise with past civilisations"? Is her teacher trying to say as nicely as possible that she is some sort of freak child out of a Stephen King novel or does he just mean that she is good at history?

Readers with children at state primary schools will be aware of the little slip that comes with the end of year report, inviting your comments and requiring your signature. Like me, you probably thought you only had to fill this bit in if you violently disagreed with the verdict that your child was a lazy good-for-nothing with psychopathic tendencies

(or, in edu-speak, is "struggling with core curriculum areas and has some difficulty relating to his peers"). It was only at a parent-teacher evening when my daughter's teacher asked, in a loaded kind of way, if I had filled in my slip, that I realised he expected more than my autograph. He was probably only using diversionary tactics to stop me trying to crane around his hand shielding the leading test results in his book – when will schools realise that parents are really only interested in how other people's children are doing? But still, it made me think. Teachers spend hours with their thesaurus trying to make you feel your really rather ordinary child is special – the least you can do is compose a few suitably obsequious sentences in return. After all, if parents can't thank the teaching profession, who will? Certainly not the Government.

Peter Mandelson couldn't have come up with a better propaganda coup for New Labour than the signing-up of Norman Tebbit to write a column in *The Mail on Sunday*. Just as we were beginning to get complacent with habitually liberal commentators



Dinah Hall

having to espouse the cause of fox-hunting simply to relieve the boredom of finding themselves conforming to the status quo, along comes Norman to remind us what we're missing. Parliament, he snarls, "seems set to give approval for dirty old men to take

young boys from schoolroom to bedroom for 'gay sex'. Too young to smoke, but 'grown-up enough to be infected with Aids as he is passed – a rent-free rent boy – from bed to bed in pursuit of the gay life of being gay.' He would rather, he says, see his grandchildren with "cigarettes in their hands than holding hands with 'same sex' partners" – Oh, isn't he sweet?

I don't suppose Norman will be giving his grandchildren copies of Melvin Burgess's *Junk* to read, then. I suspect The Library Association, which sponsors the Carnegie Medal for children's literature, is feeling rather pleased with itself as with this year's award it has managed to whip up more controversy and column inches than even the Booker achieves. I must admit I needed a stiff drink just to get through the novel – it's gruelling stuff. But I would be far more worried about the real junk out there. The serial killer is at large in children's fiction – "one-off" books of quality are an endangered species as "series" books about crime, horror or love pollute the shelves. At the risk of sound-

ing like an inverted Tebbit I would rather find my children reading about Lily injecting heroin into her milk-swollen veins than stuck into *Triple Trouble* from the J-17 series – "When three best buds fancy a trio of mega-lush lads, it looks like the perfect situation for some dream dating ..."

A letter from a reader recently confirmed my view that you can always judge a man by the newspaper he reads. "Oh dear!" he began – I'm not so sure about that bit – "You really are lovely." Ha! Just as I was beginning to feel rather pleased with myself, my oldest son came in, gave the letter a cursory glance, smirked at me and pronounced, "He's a nutter." Children are so brutally honest. A friend of mine, currently undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, told me that her sons had started to appear at her bedside every morning – partly to check that she was still there but also, she said, because they didn't want to miss the moment when her hair fell out. When it finally did her seven-year-old gazed at her for a few seconds and then said, "Who's fetching me from school today?"

هكذا من الامم

Sex, drugs and the dons

Read campus novels, and you wouldn't send students within a mile of a university, says David Walker

Sir Ron Dearing wants students (and their parents) to pump millions of extra pounds into a set of institutions staffed by paedophiles, drunks and half-wits – a sad, self-absorbed crew of intellectual malcontents who like sex with plastic dolls, drink copious quantities of cheap and nasty instant coffee, and spend their time in petty intrigues on futile committees. Yes, and they occasionally read and write books.

That's not my opinion of British academics. It's academics' own self-appraisal, written up in the pages of the university novel, not a genre you would visit for moral uplift, though you might for hints about kinky sex.

The latest example is Simon Gray's *Breaking Hearts*, published this week by Faber. It's a sour account of drugs, bondage and green carpets in London's Mile End Road – at least we assume the university portrayed in the 84-page novella is Queen Mary and Westfield College, since Gray has been lecturing at the East End institution for the past 20 years. Very unhappy, by the sound of it.

QMWC, a workaday college of London University, is not at all like the University of Sussex. "Watermouth" in Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man*, all Basil Spence modernity and echoes of the Sixties. It bears very little resemblance either to Birmingham University on its hill in Edgbaston, locale for David Lodge's caustic representations of academic life in *Small World* and *Nice Work*.

But all three share traits, the most conspicuous of which is that male academics find sexual fulfilment extremely hard, even with all those lush acres of teenage flesh all around them. One reason is that their quest is bedevilled by academic feminists, linguistic thought police. British universities may not be quite as PC as the college portrayed in David Mamet's *Oleanna*, but, according

Imagine 'Cracker' or 'Morse' without deviant dons

to Simon Gray, they are not far off. The university novel was created by Kingsley Amis in *Lucky Jim*, based on his time as a lecturer at Swansea University College. Thanks to him and his successors we know universities to be full of people who are morally degraded, petty paranoid and obsessed with language to only a slightly lesser degree than they are obsessed with sex. (Not just the male professors – academic lesbianism is in full swing in the campus novel.)

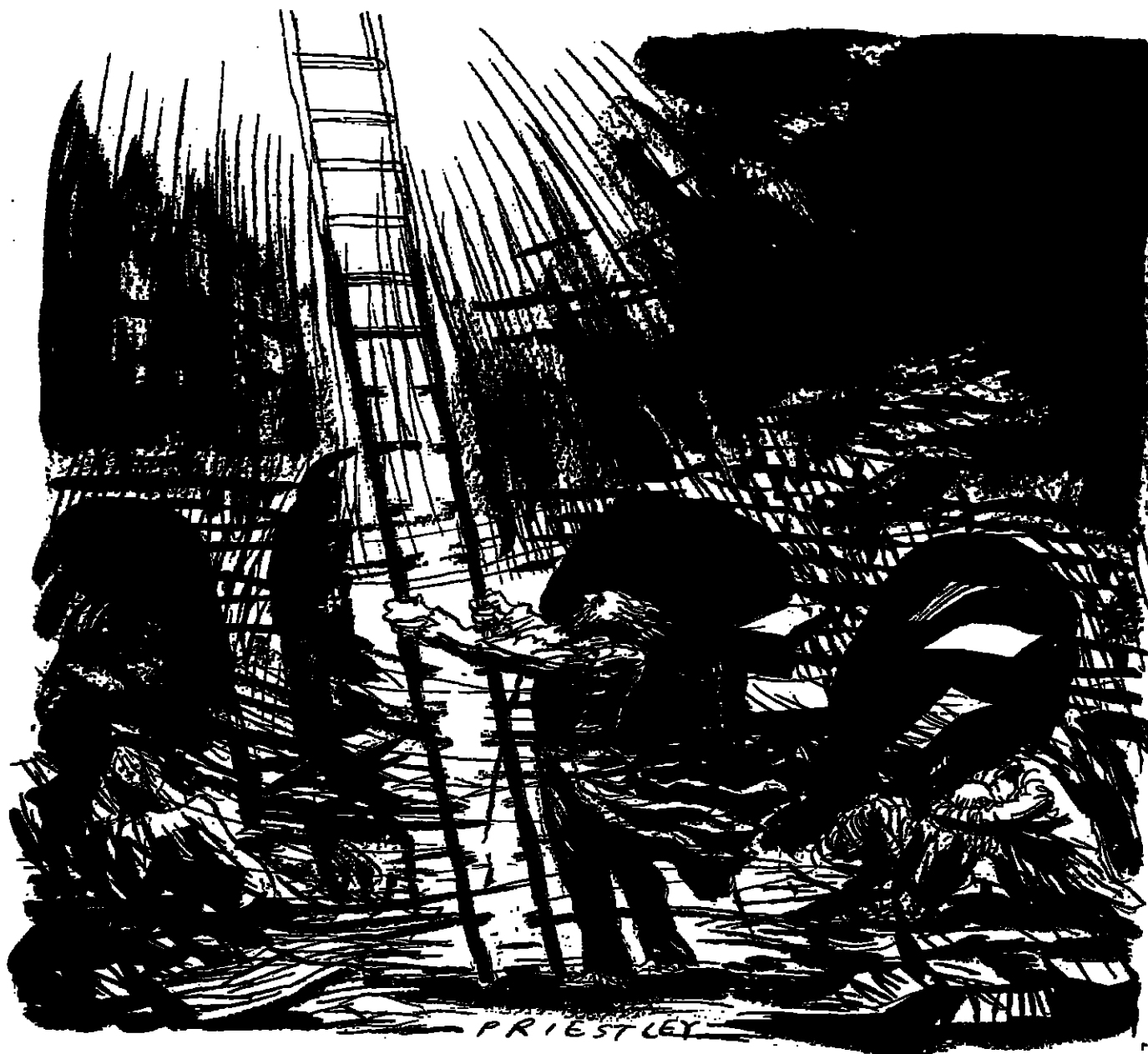
The fictional university is not a nice place. Andrew Davies's brilliant scripts for *A Very Peculiar Practice* peopled Lowlands University (Warwick?) with misfits and sexual predators; imagine *Cracker* (Manchester University) or *Morse* (Oxford) without deviant dons. Tom Sharpe's *Porterhouse* (adapted for television by Malcolm Bradbury while he was still teaching at the University of East Anglia as a professor) was a feast of Oxbridge gorgonzolas. From Evelyn Waugh to Iris Murdoch the university has appealed to fiction writers as a prime location for moral bad hats, murderers and child molesters, all of them with the added advantage of academic articulacy.

The question is: is the fiction really so misleading? Perhaps the problem is that Eng Lit professors in the field tend to fancy themselves as novelists and English has gone through some strange times of late – grappling with structuralism, deconstructionism and the advance of the feminists. Malcolm Bradbury made lecherous Howard Kirk a sociologist on the grounds that sociologists espouse a fashionable relativism in morals.

But there is evidence that academic amorality existed a long time ago, well before spending cuts bit and queer studies got going. Especially Comford's *Microcosmographia Academica*, a guide for campus Machiavellians written a century ago.

Anecdote suggests fictional accounts of lust in the lecture hall are accurate – or rather that they were, academic libido being squeezed these days under mounds of report forms for the new research bureaucracy. Ever since women arrived in higher education, the predominantly male professoriate has been tempted. For three years we entrust susceptible young people to a gang of sexual predators.

Perhaps it is just that donnish novelists, being as lazy as the next person, make use of the only first-hand experience they have got to weave their fiction around. If stockbrokers or market gardeners could write, wouldn't their fiction be as repetitive with phalandering round the futures desk or passion behind the potting shed?



Cut rents to make the poor richer

by Polly Toynbee

At last we have a government of good intent towards the poor. Tony Blair says that he will count himself a failure if society is not fairer at the end of his reign. But how is that objective to be achieved?

Most people have ambivalent attitudes towards the poor – they are keen to help the deserving, but worried about scroungers. Labour's welfare to work plan has garnered wide support because it takes both carrot and stick to the young, avoiding that dilemma. But while it will certainly help the young and single mothers, what of the rest?

Three reports out this week suggest that for many, Labour's work scheme will not manage to bridge the yawning chasm in incomes that now divides low earners from the rest. Thanks to it, poor people may get jobs, and the minimum wage ought to help. But that is against the background of the past 20 years, when the lowest paid have fallen far below average incomes.

What does being poor mean? The "Breadline Britain" report from poverty expert Professor Peter Townsend and colleagues at the University of Bristol defines poverty simply: ask the population at large what they regard as the necessities of life. When questioned by MORI, people say poverty is a lack of essentials – such as a warm overcoat, two meals a day, a fridge and a telephone. On this basis an extra 3.5 million people have fallen into poverty over the last 15 years, making a total of 11 million.

The studies sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation show that most in the bottom tenth of income distribution move in and out of work. But while getting a job lifts people off the very lowest rung, most of those on low wages are unlikely to move far up the ladder – and a third are likely to drop back into unemployment. However much a job rescues them from the worst poverty, rags-to-even-modest-middleclassdom is rare. Welfare to work will probably help many, but there is nothing in this evidence to suggest it will make a very significant difference to income redistribution.

So welfare to work may satisfy our self-interested impulse to stop the young turning into criminals. But what of our more generous, altruistic sentiments? How else is Blair's promise of a fairer society to be fulfilled?

Easy – you might say – just give the poor more money. But even supposing that is what the Government and the voters would like to do over the next few years, what are the means by which it might be done? The saints of old made it seem simple – just hand out the money with a smile. But the problem is that every penny given in state benefits only makes leaving welfare to take a job prohibitively unaffordable to those who might work.

Even a small gesture, such as, perhaps, giving those on income support a free TV licence, tightens this poverty trap. Some in the poverty lobby still call for increased universal benefits, especially child benefit. But that only wastes millions on middle-class mothers. How do you pinpoint the right people?

This dilemma is as old as the hills, a problem that has vexed governments of both punitive and philanthropic intent. How do you separate the sturdy beggars (who might work) from the frail (who can't)? The Victorians hit on the workhouse as the perfect answer. Only the really desperate would enter its doors – screening out any scroungers. Once there, they would work – welfare to work incarnate. But it was a disaster. Most of the inmates were old, sick or children, not productive workers.

Besides, the workhouse cost. Examining the

Welfare to work will help many, but there is nothing to suggest it will make a significant difference to income distribution

Victorian records of the Leeds workhouse, I found the food eaten by inmates was by no means Dickensian gruel, but three meals a day, with daily meat, beer, bread, cheese and vegetables, a far better diet than most of the poor can afford now. It was far cheaper to hand out small sums and let the poor fend for themselves. But then the old worry nagged again – how could the ratepayers be sure the parish wasn't being cheated and the work ethic undermined?

That is the mind-trap that we have to escape from if we sincerely want the poor to be richer. First, there is one large group of the poor we could help without worry, a group for whom more money would do nothing but good. We could give a fat supplement to the 2.5 million pensioners and genuinely sick who depend on income support. It would cost us about £1.3bn for every £10 extra a week – an act of pure generosity that does nothing to benefit the rest of us. But why not?

The problem comes with the fit, working-age poor. Yes, more of them can be helped to work, but today's new studies show how depressingly few of them are likely to move out of the low income brackets. Even if family credit, the benefit that tops up the wages paid to those in low-paid employment, was more generous, it has one cardinal fault,

the more the low-paid earn, the faster they lose the housing benefit they get in order to be able to afford somewhere to live: that acts as a sharp work deterrent.

In fact it's housing benefit that lies at the root of the poverty trap conundrum.

Twenty years ago rents paid for council and housing association homes were heavily subsidised by the state. But hoping to encourage the poor to use the private sector, the Tories transferred that subsidy to people in the shape of housing benefit, believing private rented housing would flourish once the poor could make their own choice of landlord. It never happened. Instead, without subsidy, council and housing association rents soared. In London now council rents are around £50, and housing associations charge some £80 or more.

What single mother could go out to work and cover the cost of a rent like that? Even on family credit she would lose too much housing benefit. What's more, housing benefit is the worst administered benefit, with long delays, so the poor fear moving in and out of work and building up rent arrears. It is also seriously prone to fraud by cheating landlords.

Meanwhile, the better-off have fled public housing to buy their own homes, leaving underclass ghettos behind them. But that flight does have one advantage. If you want to target the genuinely poor you will find them all living together on estates, with virtually no one else. If the Government returned to direct rent subsidy, the extra money would go straight into the pockets of the poorest. At a stroke it would make even a low-paid job vastly more desirable and profitable. The Government would have to subsidise local authority housing budgets again – a source of tension. But the soaring housing benefit bill would come down.

The question is, do we sincerely want to make the poor richer? Are we willing to pay more of our taxes to them? The unemployed will always be with us – the feckless, sub-normal, dysfunctional and despairing; not all can be picked up, trained, dusted down and pushed into jobs. At present social security and employment ministers are up to their necks in trying to make welfare to work happen. All now is invested in that, for if it fails there will be no money or public support for more altruistic approaches to poverty. If it's a triumph, blocking off entry to new generations of the underclass, then they believe it will create the goodwill to treat the rest more generously – including those who cannot work.

Altruism is not off the agenda, it's simply on the back-burner until all the employable are found jobs.

Married and still speaking after a fashion

When people have been married or living together for 10 or 20 years, what on earth do they find to say to each other? (asks an anxious reader who is about to get married). Well, anxious reader, I have done a survey over the years of the favourite dialogue used in the average happy marriage in different conversations and here, in no particular order, are a few of the commonest:



Miles Kington

"That was never out – it was on the line!"

"I think we come off at the next exit."

"If you're driving home, I'll have another glass of wine."

"See what's on the other side."

"It's whose anniversary today?"

"Well, if John Cleese can't come down from London and open the fete for us, we could always try Michael Palin."

"Who was that wived to us just now?"

"I can't find the Sandwich Spread anywhere."

"I think that service was a let – take it again."

"You've missed our exit."

"I thought you were going to be driving home."

"Chuck the paper over if you've finished with it."

"Who was that wived to us just when?"

"It's in the fridge where it always is."

"It's no use writing to Michael Palin if he's off doing another of his diagonal-walks-round-the-world."

"That was never out!"

"It's our anniversary today?"

"I drove home from the Whitworths last week."

"Remember? And you drank so much you were asleep when we got home? And I had to drive the babysitter home?"

"There's no news in the paper, except Camilla's party, if you call that news."

"See what's on the other side."

"We'll have to go to the next exit now."

"Why do we keep the Sandwich Spread in the fridge?"

"All the balls are down your end."

"The person in the car back there who wived to us."

"Do you think Angus Deayton opens fetes or do you think he's above that sort of thing now?"

"You quite fancy the babysitter, don't you?"

"She's not exactly a raving beauty, is she, old Camilla?"

"We don't normally give each other presents on our anniversary, do we?"

"Because it says on the label that when you open a jar

of Sandwich Spread, you should keep it refrigerated, that's why!"

"I didn't see anyone wived to us."

"Where have you put the TV remote control?"

"The next exit is 20 miles away, for God's sake!"

"I think Angus Deayton would open anything for the right money."

"Are you suggesting that I drive the babysitter home because I fancy her?"

"Damned good thing too – if Camilla were a blonde bimbo, or another Diana, just think of the hoo-ha."

"We don't have to put jam or marmalade or Bovril or mustard in the fridge, so why Sandwich Spread?"

"What is the score, by the way?"

"You quite fancy Angus Deayton, don't you?"

"The person who wived and laughed at us as we drove past – I didn't recognise them so I thought it must be a friend of yours."

"Is that 40-15 to you or 40-15 to me?"

"Do you think if we came off at this service area we could find a secret back way out?"

"It was so embarrassing when you were signalling to me across the dinner table that you wanted to go home – everyone must have noticed!"

"I don't think I fancy Diana any more either."

"I've gone off the idea of Sandwich Spread now."

"Shall we call that a day for tennis?"

"Chuck the evening paper over, would you?"

"We could always watch a video, I suppose."

"All right, we'll play safe. We'll ask the Mayores to open the fete again."

"I can't believe we've come into a service area to find a secret back way out, and now we're lost and you can't even find the way back to the motorway, do you?"

"I didn't see anyone waving."

Full list on request

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Alive, uncut – and good for a kip

Last Monday afternoon in the House of Commons, as a few stragglers made their way out after questions to the Church Commissioners, an even smaller number of our dedicated representatives was heading in for a guillotine motion on the Finance Bill. It was quiet, largely empty, a good place for a kip – listen to that bluebottle buzzing lazily above the green leather benches.

This is a normal day in the House of Commons but it very much is not what gets broadcast in the much talked about Radio 4 *Yesterday in Parliament* slot. In the fortnight left before Parliament rises for the summer break, drop into the chamber for half an hour (or if you are very for bearing, an hour). Stifle your yawn. Nine-tenths of what happens in here is meaningless ritual, mutual back-scratching or self-aggrandising

nonsense. By trying to make proceedings seem vital and alive, *Yesterday in Parliament* is a deception.

The other day MPs self-interestedly worked themselves up about the BBC's putative plan to do away with the slot. There was a lot of talk about getting important messages through to the public "unfiltered" by inky journalists – as if YIP were not an elaborate confection of every remotely interesting bit.

Here is what was actually going on that day. First up, defence questions. Number one, an obvious plant, made easier to spot by the fact that the press releases have been circulated in advance.

A short debate on recruitment to the armed forces followed. Fair enough. Then Sir Teddy Taylor wanted to know about the future of some barracks in Shoeburyness

which happens to be in his Southend constituency. Of course, Sir Teddy could have cornered the minister in the lobby, but then the readers of the *Southend Standard Recorder* would have been none the wiser.

Then Tim Collins, Tory MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, asked a question about Trident. Linda Gilroy, from Plymouth, Sutton, got up to ask a supplementary but was stopped in her tracks by the cry "Reading!" She was roundly told off by Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, for the arcane rules of the House deem the use of notes a great offence. (Why?) A few minutes later Sir George Young faced a similar accusation, but was ruled to be in order because he was touching the despatch box. Sometimes it seems that the people who do best here are probably those same, irritating types

who once knew all the rules of playground games.

Of a total of 659 MPs there were 26 present, most of whom were waiting to speak. The newspapers, as is normal for much of the parliamentary day, were represented only by the Press Association.

Some weeks ago there was a serious suggestion that MPs who failed to get in during a debate should be allowed to have their speeches recorded in *Hansard* regardless. Perhaps we should go one step further and do away with the majority of debates altogether. Where there is a real need for dialogue, perhaps a quiet gathering could be arranged in a Westminster pub. Frankly, the Great British Public would be none the poorer for it.

Fran Abrams

obituaries / gazette

Sir James Goldsmith

Sir James Goldsmith was one of the most buccannering and charismatic figures of the last 40 years.

In every aspect of his life Goldsmith - who had been knighted in 1976 in Harold Wilson's infamous resignation honours list - displayed a total indifference to convention. He was brave, reckless, the very image of Dryden's Achitophel, "Pleased with the danger, when the waves ran high / He sought the storms".

His private life involved three wives, innumerable mistresses and eight children, two born in the late 1980s to the last love of his life, the well-connected French journalist Laure de Boulay de la Meurthe. He admitted that his famous remark "when one marries one's mistress one creates a vacancy" was not original, but nevertheless it was a fair summary of his attitude to women and his behaviour to them.

His love life alone was enough to keep the gossip columns on tenterhooks ever since his elopement with Isabel Patino, daughter of one of the world's richest men back in 1954. Her death in childbirth a few months later merely compounded the world's fascination with the 21-year-old Goldsmith.

By then all the elements in his character, the gambling instinct, the rootlessness, the restlessness, the immense appeal to women, were already apparent. So was his misogyny, for, as one close friend put it, "he never really liked women".

Nevertheless he had an astonishing capacity, not only to bowl over many of the world's most desirable women but also to retain their affection after he had moved restlessly on - none of the many women in his life ever went in for "kiss-and-tell" revelations and he remained friends with most, if not all, of his ex-mistresses. Moreover he was a loving and, in his own way, an attentive and even sensitive father (he was for instance enormously sympathetic when his eldest son was diagnosed as dyslexic).

His business life was equally unconventional. Starting in his early twenties he ended 35 years later as one of the world's richest men as the result of a series of increasingly breathtaking and equally well-publicised deals - and a less well-known capacity actually to run businesses. He was never deterred from a deal because he did not have the money available nor any clear idea as to how he was going to raise it.

But his undoubted business flair received less recognition than it deserved because of the contempt he showed for orthodox financial behaviour and his flagrant and habitual disregard of the interests of the minority shareholders in the companies he controlled. To cap his amazingly full life he entered politics a few years ago as a fervent anti-European, becoming a European MP and spending an estimated £20 million on financing the Referendum Party in this year's British General Election.

Physically, the six-foot-tall Goldsmith was a dominating figure. Socially he was a complete outsider - even in the social and business circles in which he moved, though he remained overtly loyal to dubious business associates like Jim Slater and to the arrogant and snobby group around John Aspinall (a close personal friend whom he supported financially in his dark days).

For Goldsmith was the very archetype of that much-abused figure, the ruthless, rootless cosmopolitan financier. He was also vastly energetic, deeply manic-depressive and liable to fits of rage - often directed at journalists - and paranoia, cul-

minating in a spell of extreme anti-Communism in the 1980s.

In business he was equally moody. As his long-time collaborator Mme Gilberte Beaux once put it: "Jimmy thinks every morning he has nothing". This serious Jewish pessimism, reinforced by his mother's underlying native French caution, proved invaluable in ensuring that, unlike other financial operators, he could anticipate crashes - although, equally typically, he did tend to see in them the end of the world.

He inherited many of his traits from his father Frank Goldsmith, the descendant of a distinguished Jewish banking family from Frankfurt once as famous as the Rothschilds (an element of competition with them formed a significant, if unexpressed part of the son's make-up). Frank's grandfather Adolph had moved first to France and then to Britain during the anti-Semitic period of the Dreyfus case.

Frank became an MP and served for a time in the First World War before opting out of the army and public life under mysterious circumstances. But he remained known as Major during his second career as the owner of a chain of international luxury hotels - in which James spent much of his early life, and which he sold after his father's death to another great wheeler-dealer, the late Maxwell Joseph.

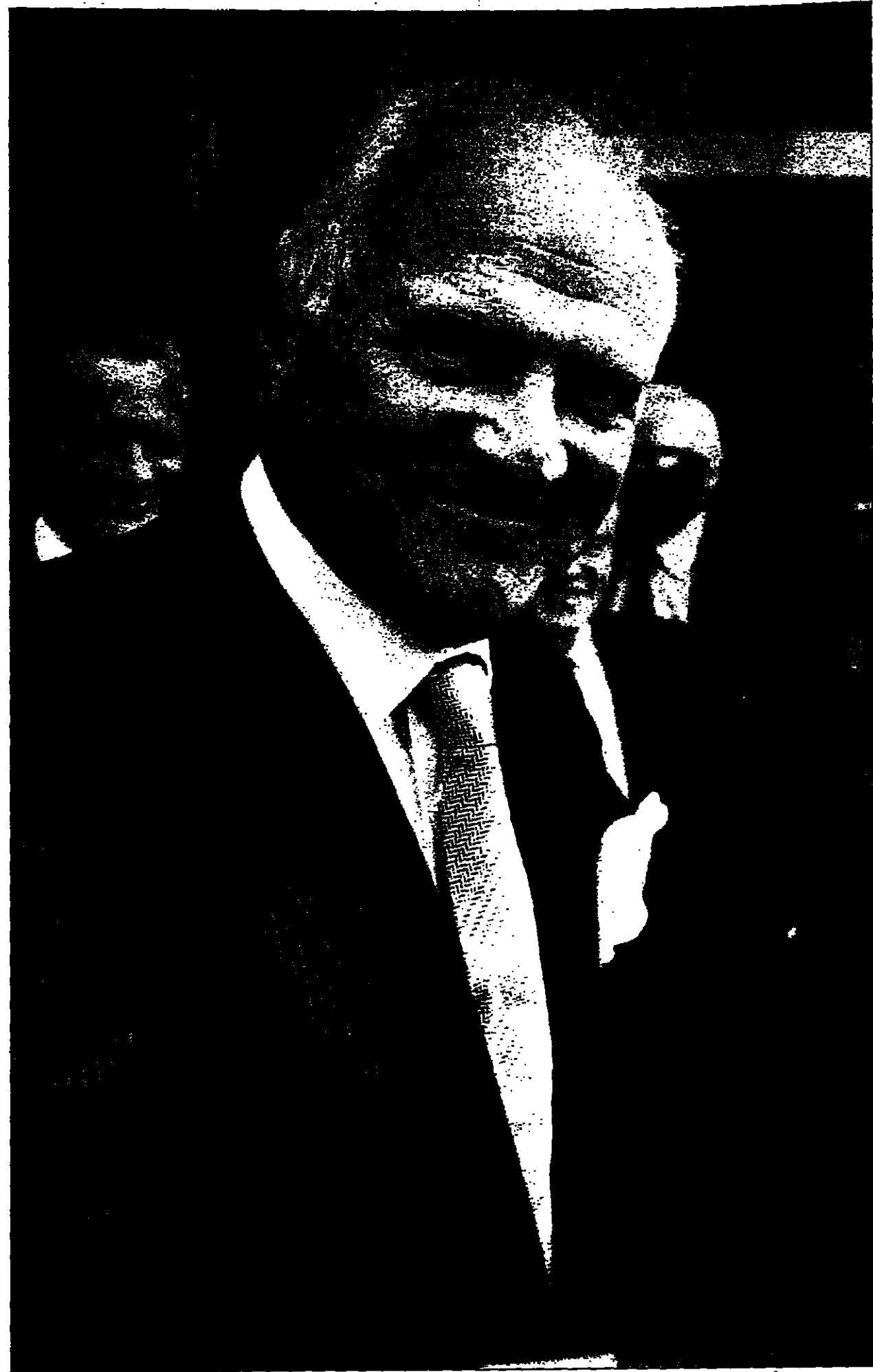
In an uncanny pre-echo of his son's life, the love of his father's life, Jacqueline Blanc, died young and he took up with Marcelle Moullier, the sister of Jacqueline's best friend, who hailed from the Auvergne, a province noted for the toughness and meanness of its inhabitants (as a result James, thought of as the archetypal Jew, was not, theoretically Jewish although he did have his eldest son, Manes, ritually circumcised). Displaying his son's contempt for convention Frank's first child, Teddy, was born out of wedlock, although they had been married for nearly four years when James Michael Goldsmith was born in 1933.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the family escaped through Spain to New York and then to the Bahamas. On their return to London, Frank was determined that his children should have an orthodox English education and James was sent first to a prep school and then to Eton. At both establishments he showed himself as unwilling to learn (partly due to dyslexia), rebellious and determined not to conform or allow himself to be browbeaten.

He left Eton at the age of 16 after an extraordinary betting coup (technically an accumulator bet on three horses) which brought him £3,000, an enormous sum for the time. He then left with an extraordinary display of spite - ordering and then breaking a set of records which he had presented, as the traditional leaving gift, to his housemaster, a man he hated.

In 1951 he did his national service, showing himself an efficient officer, able to cope with a troop of difficult squaddies, but then returned to the life of "wine, women and song" to which he had been introduced on leaving Eton.

Then in Paris on Coronation night (4 June 1953) he met and fell for Isabel Patino, daughter of Antenor Patino, an immensely rich Bolivian tin millionaire. He naturally objected to the alliance - Goldsmith's own version of the encounter included the immortal exchange that when Patino said "It is not the habit of our family to marry Jews", the 21-year-old Goldsmith replied "It is not our habit to marry Red Indians".



Goldsmith: brave and reckless - the very archetype of the restless, rootless, cosmopolitan financier

Photograph: Peter Macdonald

When Isabel was already several months pregnant the couple eloped, and after a well-publicised legal spat with her father were married in Edinburgh. But in May Isabel died giving birth to a premature but healthy baby also called Isabel. The blow was devastating years later he tried to console a friend in similar distress who asked "How long does it take to get over it?", to which Goldsmith replied "I don't think you ever do".

The whole episode, which had lasted less than a year not only left an indelible mark on the young Goldsmith, it also catapulted him on to the front pages of the world's press, a place he was to fill for most of the rest of his life.

For the next few years, in an effort to forget, Goldsmith did little except work building up a small pharmaceutical company, first in France and then in Britain - where he came up against the establishment for the

first, and certainly not the last time when he sold cut-price cortisone to the National Health Service. Even then, while still in his twenties, he displayed the business talents and the impatience, the restlessness, the almost compulsive need to gamble, to take enormous risks which were to mark the whole of his business career. Indeed at one point only the lucky timing of a bank strike stood between him and bankruptcy. But the ideas were fertile ones - it was he who devised the notion of Mothercare, taken to fruition by one of his few business partners, Selim Zilkha.

His only consolation was Ginette Lery, his pretty French secretary who became first his mistress, and then, and only after the usual long interval, his second wife - though by the time he got round to marrying her he was already enamoured of Sally Crocker Poole, who eventually married the Aga Khan.

But by the early 1960s he had already established the pattern of having two households, one in Paris, one in London. By the end of the 1960s he was living openly in London with Lady Annabel Birley, the estranged wife of his friend Mark Birley, by whom he had three children, the last, Benjamin, when she was 45.

At the same time he was starting to expand his British business interests through the take-over of a stream of well-known brands, from Procea, a fashionable slimming bread, to his biggest buy, Bovril, which proved to be a sceptical City of London that this playboy was also a serious financier. His acquisitions were all included in Cavenham Foods, which he developed as a relatively orthodox food group - though he cheerfully admitted that his original management ideas, which he thought both logical and sensible, turned out to be complete rubbish, an admission which

showed his willingness to learn from experience.

Nevertheless he blotted his copybook with the British financial establishment through the way he saved Cavenham from financial trouble, through the use of private money, in a deal which involved the sort of financial juggling which came naturally to him but was totally contrary to received practice in London or New York - as was his use of a company's own money to pay its debts.

The fact was he simply didn't care and was only too apt to treat criticism of his behaviour as springing from envy - or Communist tendencies, which he was only too ready to attribute to journalists in particular.

In financial attitudes he was perhaps most at home in Paris, the home of Gilberte Beaux, a tough French lady who acted as his right-hand person for nearly 30 years and guided his French holding company, Generale Occidentale, through

many a legal and financial storm.

Goldsmith's sound instincts were perhaps best shown at the height of the great bull market of the early 1970s when he alone foresaw the crash that was to follow and liquidated his most vulnerable holdings. Nevertheless he was so loyal to Jim Slater, who had virtually been wiped out in the slump that he was prepared to buy up Slater Walker Holdings. Such closeness, natural to Goldsmith, was bad for his image, since it led to the false assumption that he was a mere financial whiz-kid and asset-stripper like Slater.

An even worse confusion arose because of his friendship with John Aspinall and the other cronies of Lord Lucan. He was not actually present at the famous lunch at which the cronies decided to clam up about the disappearance of their chum, but his continuing friendship with this group led *Private Eye* to assume that he was involved.

This in turn led to the battery of criminal libel actions against *Private Eye* which showed the face of Goldsmith as an unforgiving, Old Testament bully. Typically, in the face of serious aggression (in which category he included most press comment) he said "I consider tolerance to be degenerate". The most extreme example of this attitude came when Barbara Conway, a regular critic of his financial activities, was dying of cancer. "I hope she chokes on her own vomit" was his only comment. The libel action ended messily but he remained a formidable opponent.

In one memorable television interview he humiliated two wretched journalists who had accused him of being a mere asset stripper. He had prepared himself very thoroughly (a virtue which had helped him in an earlier tight spot when he got an inordinate price for the Lipton tea business when he sold it to Unilever). Their ignorance and prejudice enabled him to point up the fact that throughout his career he was prepared to pour money (not necessarily his own) into developing businesses, a stark contrast not only with the Slayers of this world, but also with Lord Hanson, another tycoon with whom he is often compared.

Nevertheless he hankered after being a press lord. In 1975 he contemplated buying the *Observer* (but retreated when he took a closer look). Three years later he was seriously interested in buying Beaverbrook Newspapers, and in France he was for a time the owner of a group, Presses de la Cité which included a number of publishers and a well-known weekly news magazine, *L'Express*. His only venture in Britain was a similar magazine, *NOW*, but the British are too well served by serious daily papers and by television news to need such a publication and after a couple of years he withdrew, punctiliously paying off the journalists and turning up to their farewell party.

The libel action against *Private Eye* helped to increase Goldsmith's disenchantment with Britain (a disenchantment which extended to France after François Mitterrand's victory in 1981). His gloom was not relieved by his knighthood - a typical gesture by Harold Wilson who had a tendency to admire charming adventurers whose characters were so opposed to his native caution.

So he naturally turned to the United States as the last best hope of world capitalism and of relaxed behaviour - in New York in the early 1980s he would go out without a collar and tie for the first time in his life. His American business career started with a major chain

of supermarkets, Grand Union, where he invested enormous amounts of time, energy, money and enthusiasm.

But his real glory days were in the first half of the 1980s where, assisted by his long-time friend and merchant banker Roland Franklin, he took over a series of groups whose major attractions were that they had diversified away from a solid asset base - two of them, Diamond International and St Regis involving enormous acreages of forests.

His association with the asset-stripping brigade made Goldsmith a natural target when he attacked Goodyear, one of the industrial giants of the US. This started up a storm of protest but by then his instincts told him of the imminent arrival of another financial storm and he sold out of the company, as he did of most of his other assets. His timing was perfect, just before the Crash of October 1987, and he probably made a billion or so dollars out of his actions (although, typically, he thought the resulting slump would be deeper and longer-lasting than it proved to be. The coup, he said, was "like winning a rubber of bridge on the Titanic").

By this time he was being urged by Laure de Boulay de la Meurthe (by then virtually the only woman in his life since Annabel had refused to move to the United States) to relax, and by his brother Teddy, a well-known if eccentric ecologist, to invest his energies and his money in saving the environment. Characteristically this involved buying 18,000 acres of unspoiled Mexican forest and building a simple, but luxurious house of one tiny patch of it, a retreat where he spent an increasing amount of time. But this did not hamper his political career.

By the late 1980s he had become convinced that the European Union was a disaster and in 1995 he was elected, as member of the European Parliament in an incongruous alliance with another fervent anti-European, the upper-class French right-wing nationalist Philippe de Villiers. (On his only known visit to the Parliament he arrived on a Friday when normally the television crews did not bother to shoot. They did for him after he had said simply that he would buy the station that employed them if they didn't.)

But his last political venture was a typically flamboyant gesture, the financing of a party dedicated simply to ensuring that the British people should decide their future relationship with the EU in a Referendum. He was viciously attacked, which was rather unfair since he was proposing a democratic element in a normally elitist decision-making process.

The bloody-mindedness of the campaign was typical of a man who went his own way. But so was the fact that he did not tell the outside world that he was suffering from the cancer of the pancreas that was soon to kill him, and he continued to campaign even while undergoing debilitating chemotherapy. But although most of his candidates lost their deposits, in a number of seats they attracted enough Tory votes to hand victory to their opponents.

Nicholas Faith

James Michael Goldsmith, businessman, publisher and politician; born Paris 26 February 1933; Ki 1976; Member for France, European Parliament 1994-97; married 1st Isabel Patino (died 1954; one daughter), 2nd Ginette Lery (one son, one daughter; marriage dissolved), 3rd Lady Annabel Birley (née Vane Tempest Stewart; two sons, one daughter; one son, one daughter by Laure de Boulay de la Meurthe); died Benahavis, Spain 18 July 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

EGERTON: On 17 July 1997, Hugh Billeart at St Luke's Home, Oxford, Funeral at 11.30am on Thursday 24 July at Oxford Crematorium. No flowers by request, but if desired donations may be made to Sight Savers International (Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) c/o Reeves & Paine, 288 Abingdon Road, Oxford OX1 4TE.

For Complete BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax to 0171-293 2010.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended a performance of the Royal Entertainment at Earth Court, London SW5. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of Cornwall, Princess of Wales, were accompanied by the Duke of York, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of York, Princess of Wales. The Duke of York, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of York, Princess of Wales, were accompanied by the Duke of York, Prince of Wales, and the Duchess of York, Princess of Wales.

Birthdays

Mr Paul Allaire, chairman, Xerox Corporation, 59; Dr Heather Angel, author and wildlife photographer, 56; The Rev Dom Aidan Bellenger, Director of Historical Research, Downside Abbey, 47; Sir Nigel Brookes, Hon President, Trafalgar House, 63; Sir Andrew Buchanan, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, 60; Mr Andrew Burns, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 54; Mr John Burrow, chief constable, Essex, 62; Dame Joyce Dewis, thoracic surgeon, 72; Sir Stephen Egerton, former ambassador to Italy, 65; Miss Buchi Emecheta, author and lecturer, 53; Mr Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens), rock singer and songwriter, 49; Mr Norman Jewison, film director, 71; Sir Kirby Laing, former chairman, Laing Properties, 81; Mr Leigh Lawrence, actor, 54; Dr Jonathan Miller, television, film and theatre director, 68; Mr John Oakes, actor, 71; Mr Julian Pettifer, broadcaster, 62; Lieut-Gen Sir Stuart Pringle, former Commandant General, Royal Marines, 69; Mr Karel Reisz, film director, 71; Mr Barry Richards, cricketer, 52; Mr Michael St John Parker, businessman, Abingdon School, 56; Mr Lloyd Barnaby Smith, ambassador to Nepal, 52; Miss Kay Starr, singer, 75; Mr Isaac Stern, violinist, 77; Mr Dennis Trevelyan, former principal, Mansfield College, Oxford, 68; Mr Robin Williams, actor and comedian, 45; Sir Ian Wood, chairman

and managing director, John Wood Group, 55.

Anniversaries

Births: St Philip Neri, missionary, 1515; Matthew Prior, poet, 1664; Paul Julius, Baron von Reuter (Israel Beer Joseph), news agency founder, 1816; Sir John Gilbert, painter and illustrator, 1817; Jacques Feyder (Frederick), film director, 1888; Harold Hart Crane, poet, 1899; Ernest Miller Hemingway, novelist, 1899; Dorothea Robert Burns, poet, 1796; Daniel Lambert, fat man who weighed 739 pounds at his death, 1809; Dame Ellen Alicia Terry, actress, 1928; George Macmurray Trevelyan, historian, 1962; Philip St John Basil Rathbone, actor, 1967; Albert John Lutuli, president of the African National Congress, 1987. On this day: the Marquesses of Lansdowne were discovered by Alvan Mendana, 1595; the Society of Jesus was dissolved by Pope Clement XIV, 1773; Napoleon defeated the Mamelukes in Egypt in the Battle of the Pyramids, 1798; George Christian Frederick Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was proclaimed King Leopold I of the Belgians after the country became a separate kingdom, 1831; the Confederates were victorious in the first Battle of Bull Run, 1861; Battersea Bridge, London, opened, 1890; the Tate Gallery, presented to the nation by Sir Henry Tate, was opened, 1897; Guam, in the Pacific, was re-occupied by the US, 1944; in the US, the first nuclear

merchant ship, the *NS Savannah* was launched, 1959; Mrs Sirinawo Bhandaram became prime minister of Ceylon (Sri Lanka); she was also the world's first woman prime minister, 1960; Runcom Bridge across the Mersey opened, 1961; Commander Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the Moon, 1969; France exploded a nuclear device at Martinique Atoll in the Pacific, 1973; the British ambassador to the Irish Republic was killed by a handmine, 1976. Today is Independence Day in Belgium and the Feast Day of St Arbogastes, St Laurence of Brindisi, St Praxedes, St Victor of Marselles.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Anna Jackson, "Japanese Country Textiles", 2.30pm.

Appointments

Mr Francis Corstik, to be Consul-General to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Mr Alan Paul, to be British Senior Representative to the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group with the personal rank of Ambassador. Mr Jeffrey James, to be British High Commissioner to the Republic of Kenya. Mr John Barnes and Mr Khurshid Hassan Druze, to be full-time Immigration Adjudicators, designated Special Adjudicators, sitting in Greater London.

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*.

Magistrates' Courts

R v Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate, ex p Levy; QBD Div Ct (Simon Brown LJ, Garland J) 16 June 1997. Where judicial review proceedings were brought seeking mandamus to require a magistrate to state a case and the point at issue was a challenge to the conviction, if the facts were not in dispute and it was clear from the magistrate's refusal to state a case what the case would have contained, the true issue of the validity of the conviction should be placed directly before the court on a judicial review. Although a disqualification from driving might be removed on appeal it was effective until that event, unless an application to suspend it pending appeal had been made.

Ruth M Kirby (J D Spicer & Co) for the appellant; Andrew Colman (CPS) for the Crown.

Tax

Attwood (Inspector of Taxes) v Andell Car Wash Ltd; CA (Beldam LJ, Peter Gibson LJ, Waller LJ) 17 July 1997.

CASE SUMMARIES

21 July 1997

A specially designed building consisting of an automatic conveyor-belt type car wash and housing the necessary machinery was not a single item of plant for the purposes of capital allowances. The building constituted the premises in which the car wash trade was carried on, not the plant with which it was carried on.

Peter Whitman QC, Brian Green QC (Denton Hall) for the taxpayer; James Munby QC, Timothy Brennan (Inland Revenue Solicitor) for the Crown.

Prisoners

R v Secretary of State for Home Department; ex p Salazar; QBD Crown Office List (Bennett J) 24 June 1997. When deciding whether to remove a prisoner from a mother and baby unit, the welfare of the child was not the paramount consideration. Although the welfare of the child had to be taken into account, it had to be remembered that the mother was still a prisoner subject to prison discipline, and that the unit had to cater for the wel-

fare of a number of mothers and babies. It was those matters together with the overall interests of and the practicability of running the unit that the governor had to bear in mind when making her decision.

Philippa Kaufman (Whitman Burgess) for the applicant; Steven Kovats (Treasury Solicitor) for the respondents.

Crime

R v Travers; CA Cr Div (Waller LJ, Gage J, Bennett J) 9 July 1997. In a prosecution under s 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 for fraudulent evasion of excise duty, in order to establish that the goods were dutiable there was no requirement to show that more than the quantities set out in the schedule to Art 5(3) of the Excise Duties (Personal Reliefs) Order 1992 were intended to be imported, and there was no requirement if more than those quantities were being imported to establish that Customs & Excise were not satisfied that the purpose was for personal use. The proper course

was to concentrate simply on establishing beyond reasonable doubt that the goods were being imported for a commercial purpose without any presumption flowing from quantities.

Chris Stanbrook QC, Nigel van der Bijl (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant; Gerald Barker QC, Anthony Webb (C & E Solicitor) for the Crown.

Hunting

R v National Trust ex p Scott & ors; QBD Crown Office List (Rucker J) 16 July 1997. There was no jurisdiction to entertain a challenge to a decision by the Council of the National Trust to end deer hunting on Trust land. The decision was not amenable to judicial review as it had been made by the Trustees in the exercise of their discretionary powers in the management of Trust property, and thus related to the National Trust's conduct of its affairs as a charity. Accordingly in order to take proceedings authorisation was required by the Charity Commissioners.

Michael Belfoff QC, Timothy Corner (Knights, Tunbridge Wells) for the applicants; Lindsay Russell QC, Timothy Evans (Winkworth & Pemberton) for the respondents.

The overseas buying spree that Footsie watchers failed to factor in

The incredible, rip-roaring performance of Footsie this year has caught many of the City's highly paid fund managers on the hop.

They, like strategists who attempt to plot the direction of the stock market, are astonished by the heady scramble for blue chips which took the index to within a whisker of 5,000 points.

Despite Friday's disarray, the latest example of the volatility of the stock market, Footsie rose 77.7 points last week. It is, of course, vulnerable to New York, further transatlantic gyrations would damage sentiment.

At the turn of the year NatWest Securities was regarded as rather brave, and in some quarters a little foolhardy, when it predicted the blue-chip index would end the year at 4,600.

A little over half way through 1997 and NatWest's estimate has been submerged in the market's euphoria.

Why have so many experts been wrong footed by Footsie's display? There is no clear cut answer although the growing belief among experienced market men is the fund managers and crystal gazers failed to take sufficient account of the growing internationalisation of world stock markets.

They factored in the impact of a Labour government, perhaps overplaying the possible negative impact, the demoralisation exercises and the underlying strength of the market.

But "Johnny Foreigner" was the buying influence they overlooked. On the accepted valuation measurements there is no doubt blue chips are expensive. But compared with ratings in many other markets they are cheap. Goldman Sachs, the US investment house, points out that the market's prospective p/e is approaching 17, in Europe the range is 20 to 23. So, with Britain's stable

political outlook and still improving economy, blue chips look attractive to foreigners seeking investment havens.

The overseas buying spree, mainly from the US and Europe with some input from Japan, explains, in part, the yawning gap which has opened between blue chips and the rest of the market. After all, most foreign investors brave enough to chance their arm in what is, in some respects, an unfamiliar market are unlikely to stray from the comfort and protection afforded by blue chips.

Footsie's increasing financial weighting and the conversion stampede are, of course, other large influences in the blue-chip index's strength.

The City's army of bears managed to drag relief towards the end of last week when shares gave ground. But a Dow Jones Average around 8,000 points and Footsie nudging 5,000 is a nightmare scenario for many fund managers



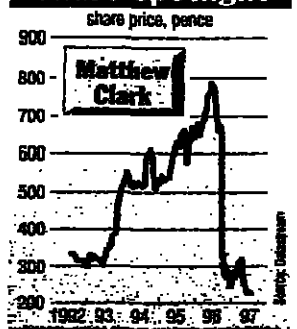
STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

and could explain concerted efforts to talk the market down - witness the astonishing up with glits and down with equities result of the most recent

Share spotlight



Merrill Lynch survey among fund managers.

It would, of course, be unrealistic to expect the Footsie rampage to continue. Surely a sharp correction, at least 400 points, must be imminent? After all the index has climbed from 4,118.5 since the start of the year.

If the veteran market men have got it right and the old valuation yardsticks will have to be revised to accommodate the brave new international world, then those 5,000 points forecasts could even prove to be too cautious.

There will, of course, be a retreat, perhaps a savage one. Markets have to pause for breath. Providing Wall Street

does not produce any nasty shocks: nothing untoward happens on the domestic front (such as a sudden falling out of love with Labour) and there is not an eruption of international tension, then any serious downturn might have to wait until October's tenth anniversary of the great crash. Markets inevitably get nervous ahead of such ominous occasions, fearing a reversion of the ghosts of past tragedies.

The run-up to the crash is bound to be a time of some anxiety, giving bears, such as embarrased fund managers and stretched market makers, a heaven sent opportunity to try to get blue chips lower; thereby nullifying the humiliation of the brave new international world, then those 5,000 points forecasts could even prove to be too cautious.

One of the continuing market talking points is when will second and third liners join the fun. They have lagged behind their blue chip peers, looking

increasingly forlorn. Many are confident the gap between big and small will start to narrow. Simon Smith, head of equities at Albert E. Sharp, the nation's largest independent stockbroker, believes they will cease to languish in the doldrums once the holiday season is over and the City swings back into full action.

"We see nothing to change our fundamental belief that smaller companies offer exceptionally good value," he says. "At this stage of the economic cycle smaller companies have traditionally stood on premium ratings: today they are at significant discounts. Thus the main market either looks expensive or, as we believe, the smaller companies market looks significantly undervalued."

Much of this week's profits attention will be concentrated on Matthew Clark, the country's second-largest order-maker, which last summer was

stripped of its go-go share rating after producing a shock profit warning. The shares were pulped from 700p to around 350p; they are now bumping along at 230p.

Alcopops did the trading damage and in the year ended April Matthew Clark rolled out £17.2m against earlier hopes of more than £70m. This time round it should manage £40m, although last week's comments from its big rival, HP Bulmer, indicated it is still feeling the pinch.

Others reporting this week include SmithKline Beecham, a second-quarter slightly higher at £355m: Reuters higher year profits little changed at £44m and Imperial Chemical Industries sharply down at £101m. But things are changing at ICI. It is being transformed, increasing its specialty chemical side, selling its bulk chemicals. So the results will not have much relevance to the new-look group.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield of last year's dividend grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio in the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex rights: Ex-dividend: Ex 30 of United Securities Market's Suspended: Ex Party Paid: Ex Nil Paid: Shares: 4 All Stock. Source: FT Information.

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 335 and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

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Anyone with a line-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of the independent index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 335. For assistance, call our helpline 071 873 4378 (9.00am - 5.00pm). Calls cost 50p per minute. Call charges include VAT.

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	6.75%	Discount	5.50%
Prime	7.00%	Prime	5.50%
Overnight	5.75%	Overnight	5.50%
3-month	5.75%	3-month	5.50%
6-month	5.75%	6-month	5.50%
12-month	5.75%	12-month	5.50%

For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Prospect, Leeds LS2A 2PF. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. Calls may be monitored and/or recorded. Applicants must be 18 or over. Free banking means that there are no charges for cheque and cash machine withdrawals in the UK, standing orders and direct debits. Switch payments or monthly statements.

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Share	Price	Change	Yield	Div	Div Date	Div Yield
Alcoholic Beverages						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Banks, Merchant						
Barclays	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Barclays	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Barclays	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Banks, Retail						
Barclays	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Barclays	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Barclays	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Breweries, Pubs & Rest						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Diversified Industries						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Electricity						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Building/Construction						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Electronics						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Food Manufacturers						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gas Distribution						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health Care						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Household Goods						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Insurance						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Investment Companies						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Investment Trusts						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leisure & Hotels						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Life Assurance						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Media						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pharmaceuticals						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Printing & Paper						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Retailers, Food						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Retailers, General						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Support Services						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Telecommunications						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Textiles & Apparel						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tobacco						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Transport						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Water						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Share	Price	Change	Yield	Div	Div Date	Div Yield
Government Securities						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mediums						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Longs						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Stock	Price	Change	Yield	Div	Div Date	Div Yield
Water						
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Adnoca	1.00	0.00	0.00			

business & city

**FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEAR**

 Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
 BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Ross pressed over rejected Littlewoods bid

**Michael Harrison and
Nigel Cope**

The pressure was mounting last night on the Littlewoods chairman James Ross to explain why he rejected a rival £540m bid for the group's entire chain of high street stores, even though it was tabled by one of the UK's most reputable venture capital firms and backed by Nomura, one of the world's biggest banks.

Under the deal, Littlewoods would have also been granted board representation and an equity stake in the new

business, enabling it to cash in when the company was sold or floated.

Mr Ross's decision instead to accept a £192.5m offer from Marks & Spencer for 19 prime high street shops is expected to come under intense scrutiny when the Moores family, who control the Littlewoods empire, hold one of their regular "forum" meetings tomorrow – the same day that the group publishes its annual results.

The rival offer was made to Littlewoods' advisers, BZW, on 29 May by CVC Capital Partners, which manages

£650m of funds including some on behalf of the US bank Citicorp. CVC was lining up Nomura and Crédit Suisse First Boston to provide banking facilities.

Under the terms of the bid CVC offered to pay £550m for the chain of 135 shops of which £520m was in cash with a further £30m in the form of loan notes.

It was a condition of the offer that Littlewoods reinvested £20m in equity alongside CVC and its partners. The offer was amended slightly four days later after

feedback from Littlewoods so that CVC would pay £540m in cash with Littlewoods reinvesting £40m in equity.

In a letter to Mr Ross dated 2 June, Michael Smith chairman of CVC, said: "We continue to be highly enthusiastic about acquiring Littlewoods Stores and have attempted to put forward an offer which best meets the needs of the family shareholders, TLO [The Littlewoods Organisation] and the employees, suppliers and customers of the business."

"In calculating the true

value of our offer we hope that full consideration is given to our desire to develop Littlewoods Stores as a whole and to preserve the heritage of the brand."

Mr Smith added that, as previously stated, "we are keen to have TLO as an equity partner and would see board representation as an integral part of that."

A dissident faction within the Littlewoods clan last week launched an attack on Mr Ross's handling of the sale to M&S, arguing in a four page memo that the rival bid would

have involved fewer redundancies and kept the Littlewoods business trading as a going concern.

The memo also attacked Mr Ross's strategy, saying the management had a duty to inform the company's shareholders of all material facts concerning the sale of the stores business, adding: "This does not appear to be the case."

Littlewoods last week disputed the facts of the memo, saying there had never been a bid of £540m on the table. It also said the M&S offer

had been discussed by the board and that Mr Ross's strategy had the "broad support" of the Moores family.

Opponents of Mr Ross claim the deal with M&S could mean up to 3,500 job losses in the longer run. There could be 1,800 redundancies in the 19 stores M&S is acquiring, since there was no guarantee that any of the former Littlewoods staff would be guaranteed jobs, and a further 250 job losses at Littlewoods' Liverpool headquarters.

The other jobs which would be under threat are in a further

16 stores which Mr Ross intends to dispose of.

He plans to keep the remaining 100 and refocus them on selling ladies fashion wear to the over-35s.

Meanwhile, it has emerged that three members of the Moores family are being sued for £60m in the US by a British businessman.

The suit, filed by Douglas Leese, now a Miami resident, accuses the three – Lady Grantchester, her brother John Moores and son James – of "mail fraud" and "racketeering".

Brown's base rate strategy under attack

**Michael Harrison and
Diane Coyle**

Gordon Brown's decision to give the Bank of England independence to set interest rates came under attack last night from a leading economist as further evidence emerged of the damage done to business confidence by the series of rate rises since the election.

David Gowland, a respected professor of economics at the University of Derby, said there was no evidence that the Bank's new Monetary Policy Committee, which sets interest rates, would boost the credibility of the Chancellor's anti-inflation strategy. He also claimed that the strategy was undermined because Mr Brown retained the right to change the inflation targets and appoint the members of the committee.

Meanwhile, two new surveys highlighted increasing worries among businesses and exporters that rising interest rates were leading to an overvalued pound. Interest rates have risen by three-quarters of a point to 6.75 per cent since the election and most economists expect a further half-point rise this year.

The latest quarterly export indicator from DHL shows a decline in export confidence while the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) reported that economic confidence had dipped in the last three months.

According to the DHL survey of 1,000 exporters, two-thirds cite exchange rates as a concern, warning the strong pound will have a negative impact on sales. The CIM, meanwhile, said that there had been a drop in its confidence index with most manufacturing sectors reporting below-average growth plans because of the impact of the strong pound.

Professor Gowland's attack comes in a pamphlet published today by the right-leaning think tank, Politica, which describes the dramatic changes intro-

duced by Mr Brown at the Bank as "political showmanship".

The report marks the first academic judgement of the Chancellor's three key decisions since Labour came to power – giving the Bank the independence to set interest rates, collecting all financial regulation including banking supervision under one roof, and handing over responsibility for gilt sales to the Treasury.

Professor Gowland is most critical of the third of these, the least noticed, saying it is almost certainly a bad move since all the expertise at managing government debt lies with the Bank. Switching it to the Treasury will lead to a lack of co-ordination as the Bank will still oversee the gilt-edged market.

But Professor Gowland also expresses doubts about the creation of a super-regulator. He says there are overwhelming advantages in having a single regulator, but the Chancellor's plans have not been well formulated. In addition, there could be serious difficulties in the transition from one structure to another.

The report comes amid signs of increasing concern among Bank officials about the delays involved in setting up the new super-regulator. Its head, Howard Davies, leaves the Bank of England to start the new job at the beginning of next month.

Officials say that the practicalities are turning out to pose more difficulties than expected, and issues such as the location and the terms and conditions of staff remain to be resolved.

On interest rates, Professor Gowland argues that the Chancellor's strategy suffers because there is no mechanism for appointing members of the Monetary Policy Committee through a federal banking system. The US and Germany are both able to draw on regional bankers, whereas Mr Brown appoints the Bank of England's experts.

Banking on Change by David Gowland, Politica, £7



Stereotypes galore but does Basil's view of the 'lazy and untrustworthy' Spanish reflect more badly on him than Manuel? Photograph: Rex

Europhobes thrill to Spanish practices

John Willcock

Germans are the most humourless workers in Europe while their Spanish counterparts are the laziest and least trustworthy, according to a survey published today which will thrill xenophobes everywhere.

The survey, Euroworker, from 3i's European Enterprise Centre could well inflame north-south tensions in the EU; in the league table of "particular strengths" German workers are mentioned no fewer than eight times under headings such as education level, efficiency and adherence to the rules. When it comes to Spain's particular strengths, it has "none".

Indeed 3i's whole approach reeks of the Eurovision Song Contest with the Spaniards getting "null points" for their willingness to work and punctuality.

Before British Europhobes start patting themselves on the back, it should be said that British workers got a panelling for their poor educational standards. And the criticism comes from their own managers.

Businessmen from Britain rated their own workers' education level at 2, compared to +61 for the Germans and +21 for the French. Even the Italians are reckoned to be far better educated, scoring +19.

The Brits are also accused by their own countrymen of lack-

ing creativity, although this presumably doesn't extend to the ability to think up reasons for holding a tea break.

Why compile a list of such incendiary views at all? Adam Quarry, 3i director of marketing, explains: "The views expressed provide an insight into some of the employment factors which influence the competitiveness of Europe's five largest economies and decisions involving cross-border investment."

Mr Quarry noted that managers in each country were willing to admit weaknesses in their own workforces. But he was concerned to see "such low appreciation of workers,

employment and government in the Mediterranean countries of Italy and Spain by their counterparts further north in Europe."

Quite. The 3i research summarises findings among managers of Europe's small and medium-sized independent businesses in Britain, Germany, France, Spain and Italy. Managers were asked to give a rating of between +100 (very good) and -100 (very poor) for factors contributing to the quality of their own and each other's workforce and working conditions.

Germany's leader Chancellor Helmut Kohl may rule a humourless nation but he has the last laugh: when managers were asked to rate the effectiveness of their own and each others' rules, three out of five governments were rated "poor". But Germany's was rated the best by far at +26, more than four times higher than Tony Blair's lot, which got just +6, despite the latter's much-vaunted landslide election victory.

Still, New Labour did better than its French counterpart which rated -5, while Spain got -16 and finally the hapless Italian government, which won a confidence-shrilling -35.

All in all, 3i's executives may be well advised to avoid Europe's summer countries during the summer holidays.

Sears 'inundated' with offers for shoe businesses

**Nigel Cope
City Correspondent**

Sears says it has been inundated with offers for its ailing footwear businesses which were placed in the hands of a company doctor in May. The offers include two for the entire group which spans Docis, Shoe Express, Shoe City and Cable & Co. One offer is from an overseas retailer.

The other is thought to be from a UK financial buyer. Sears says that it has also received "hundreds" of expressions of interest for various parts of the group.

However, the company has not disclosed the price tags attached to the bids. Given the scale of British Shoe Corporation's losses it is thought that the chains will attract bargain basement valuations even though they have high market shares and well-known brand names.

Clarks, the Somerset-based shoe manufacturer and retailer, could be interested in Shoe City, the large out-of-town shoe chain, as Clarks is under-represented outside of traditional high street locations.

Stylo, which has already acquired the Saxon and Flush

Puppy chains from Sears, could be interested in the Sears stores business which operates concessions in department stores.

David James, the corporate rescue specialist, who was appointed chairman of the British Shoe in May, is waiting for the management of the individual formats to complete their revised business plans.

He will then decide on the level of investment needed to support these proposals. Mr James and his team are also compiling external sales memoranda for each division. However, he says that "no decision

has been reached by Sears on whether to sell all or any of the business".

He says he has not been approached by any of the management about a possible buyout. No bid has been received from Rebecca Cottrell, the former managing director of British Shoe who stepped down earlier this year. There has been speculation that she is interested in leading a bid.

Mr James says he has been pleased with the progress made so far.

"I'm delighted at the response from management and have been impressed by their creativity."

There have so far been no shop closures or redundancies.

Once a powerhouse of the UK footwear market, British show Corporation has been on the slide for years.

Though the former chief executive, Liam Strong, slimmed the group from 14 formats to four during his troubled five-year tenure, the business made a loss of £9m last year compared with a profit of £7.5m in 1995.

JP Morgan, a merchant bank, has been appointed to examine the feasibility of selling the whole group or attracting new investors.



David James: No decision yet on whether to sell

NatWest in limbo after Prudential merger talks fail

John Willcock

The strategic direction of NatWest Group will remain in limbo until at least 5 August when the bank will announce half-year profits and a far-reaching restructuring of investment banking operations, after the collapse of merger talks with the Prudential last week.

Neither NatWest nor the Prudential would comment on the talks yesterday. But it is understood the Pru approached Britain's biggest bank a fortnight ago, and that the preliminary talks broke down on the subject of who would get the top jobs in the proposed £27bn merger.

This latest incident follows earlier rumours of an approach by Barclays Bank to buy NatWest, strongly denied by both sides, and more substantial rumours of talks with Abbey National, again denied.

NatWest's shareholders have grown restive after the recent £77m traded options black hole was discovered, and the subsequent resignation of Martin Owen from the top job at NatWest Markets.

NatWest's chairman, Lord Alexander, has promised shareholders a revamped strategy for the investment bank with the results in a fortnight.

There are unconfirmed rumours NatWest has already decided to return its main treasury function from Markets to the clearing bank, which would theoretically make it easier to dispose of Markets if NatWest decided to do so.

Denis Wanless, chief executive of NatWest, took over as head of the investment bank when Mr Owen departed, while a search was started for the latter's replacement. It is thought unlikely NatWest will persist with its original strategy of building a world-class investment bank to rival the likes of Merrill Lynch.

City observers have not discounted another approach by the Pru. The Pru's current strategy is to widen its customer base and increase its distribution outlets and product range, all of which NatWest would provide.

The stumbling block so far, according to analysts, is that the Pru's chief executive, Sir Peter Davis, and his management team feel they are on a roll following the acquisition of Scottish Amicable, and have no intention of allowing the NatWest team to take the lead in a merged set-up.

Either Lord Alexander or Mr Wanless would have to bow out of the top jobs, according to this analysis.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's High	Range	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol	YTD %	1996/97 %	1996/97 %
FTSE 100	4877.20	+77.7	+1.6	4964.20	4056.60	3.34			
FTSE 250	4484.10	+75.8	+1.7	4729.40	4386.20	3.70			
FTSE 350	2339.50	+37.7	+1.8	2373.70	2017.90	3.41			
FTSE SmallCap	2194.62	-9.7	-0.4	2374.20	2179.29	3.22			
FTSE All-Share	2284.14	+33.7	+1.5	2316.03	1989.78	3.38			
New York	7890.46	-31.36	-0.4	8038.86	5032.94	1.83			
Tokyo	20249.32	+373.8	+1.9	20881.07	17303.85	0.781			
Hong Kong	15670.40	+345.1	+2.3	15706.29	12085.17	2.871			
Frankfurt	4196.53	+155.6	+3.8	4227.31	2848.77	1.301			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK Interest Rates									
Instrument	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.72	7.44	7.02	7.88	7.08	8.00			
US	5.56	5.94	6.24	6.84	6.53	6.99			
Japan	0.59	0.82	2.29	3.39					
Germany	3.16	3.31	4.58	6.39	6.37				
Bond Yields %									
Instrument	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.72	7.44	7.02	7.88	7.08	8.00			
US	5.56	5.94	6.24	6.84	6.53	6.99			
Japan	0.59	0.82	2.29	3.39					
Germany	3.16	3.31	4.58	6.39	6.37				
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Instrument	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
British Telecom	187	32.5	21.0	Medway	222	34	12.3		
Credit Ltd	287.5	47	18.8	Barclays PLC	5.5	12.4			
SmithDavid & Jones	196	28.5	17.0	RJB Mining	287.5	28.5	8.0		

CURRENCIES									
£/\$									
Index	Close	Week's High	Range	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol	YTD %	1996/97 %	1996/97 %
\$ (London)	1.6744	-0.026	-1.5466						
\$ (New York)	1.6800	-0.256	-1.5448						
DM (London)	2.9983	-0.049	-2.3053						
¥ (London)	193.418	+0.818	167.983						
£ Index	104.8	-0.2	84.8						
\$/DM									
Index	Close	Week's High	Range	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol	YTD %	1996/97 %	1996/97 %
\$ (London)	0.5972	+0.71	0.8470						
\$ (New York)	0.5982	+0.44	0.6473						
DM (London)	1.7907	+2.116	1.4917						
¥ (London)	115.515	+1.880	108.685						
£ Index	103.7	+1.1	96.5						
OTHER INDICATORS									
Instrument	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
US Bond	18.54	+0.48	19.49						
GBP	324.35	+4.1	388.70						
Gold	193.71	+4.73	248.26						
Base Rate	6.75%								



GAVYN DAVIES

'Once the economy works up a real head of steam, the situation generally proves much more extreme, and takes far longer to control, than anyone initially expects. The same could easily be happening again now'

The role of luck in the Bank's policy dilemma

It was frequently argued before the election that the long-term fundamental position of the economy remained extremely weak, but that this was being disguised by a temporary period of excellent short-term performance. Actually, the truth could easily turn out to be the other way around. Goldman Sachs is just completing a study of long-term growth prospects for about 50 countries around the world, and the preliminary results suggest that the underlying growth rate of the UK may have increased to around 2.5-2.8 per cent per annum, fractionally higher than the European average and at least a quarter point above its 20-year historic rate.

This should not be taken as definitive, only as provisionally encouraging. However, what should be taken as definitive is that the short-term performance of the economy is shaping up as a huge headache, with every opportunity for a major policy misjudgment in the near future.

The policy dilemma is, of course, intimately connected to the building society windfalls, which this column argued last week should have been prevented by the last government. Since then, people have asked why, if this was so important, the new Government did nothing to control the spending of these windfalls in the July Budget. Unfortunately, this was not really practicable.

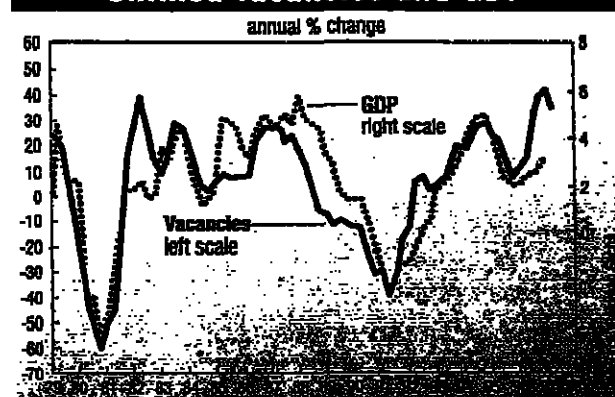
The problem with announcing administrative changes in July was that many people would already have spent their Halifax windfalls, or at least booked their summer holidays on the proceeds. Also, a windfall tax on the building society accounts would have very odd distributional effects – it would be like a wealth tax applied to the relatively poor people who happen to hold these accounts, while

leaving the most wealthy households completely untouched.

An alternative would have been to have given new PEPs-like tax incentives to encourage investors to leave their windfall gains in savings accounts, rather than using them to finance extra spending. The problem with this idea, however, is that many households would have been able to take advantage of the tax incentives, while using other forms of savings to finance additional expenditure. The Government would then have simply made a further donation to boost the savings of these households, while having little if any effect on their spending patterns. Again, the only people likely to have been affected would have been the poorest households, who could not have found other means of financing their extra spending. It is easy to see why Gordon Brown rejected these options.

With all this extra spending power hitting the economy, many would claim that the policy "dilemma" is not a dilemma at all – monetary policy should simply be tightened further as soon as possible, whatever the consequences for the exchange rate. After all, data out last week showed consumer confidence remaining at the remarkable peak levels that were recorded immediately after the election in June, and there has been no sign yet from business surveys that there has been any meaningful slowdown in any sector of the economy, despite the rise in the exchange rate. When the economy was last in a comparable position to the present – which was shortly after Mrs Thatcher's third

Unfilled vacancies and GDP



election win in the summer of 1987 – it would take another 12-18 months (with a 5 per cent rise in base rates) before consumer confidence peaked, and yet another two years before inflation began to decline. In other words, once the economy works up a real head of steam, the situation generally proves much more extreme, and takes far longer to control, than anyone initially expects. The same could easily be happening again now.

Nevertheless, there does exist a real dilemma for the policy makers at the Bank. Unlike in the equivalent period in 1987-88, macro-economic conditions have already tightened very significantly in the past few months, and it is acutely difficult to judge whether this is already sufficient to produce the necessary slowing in the economy next year. The tightening is much larger than is commonly acknowledged in the policy

debate, mainly because so many commentators have allowed themselves to become mesmerised by the absence of consumer tax rises in the Budget. The fact is that the Chancellor's decision to freeze the public spending plans at the Ken Clarke levels in each of the next two years has imparted into the system a much bigger fiscal brake than anything which could feasibly have been contemplated in the Budget.

The squeeze on public spending plans, measured in real terms, actually tightened a notch in the Budget, because the Treasury left the nominal spending plans fixed while increasing its inflation

estimate by 0.75 per cent in each of the next two years. As a result of this combination, there will be no growth at all in the real control total for the first two years of this Government's term.

Consider the impact of this on the economy. The public sector accounts for roughly 40 per cent of national income, either through the direct purchase of goods and services, or through transfer payments (pensions, etc) which support private consumption. That 40 per cent of GDP will show no growth at all in real terms for two years, if the Treasury sticks to its plans. That means the other 60 per cent of the economy must grow at a 5 per cent annual rate to keep overall GDP expanding at a 3 per cent clip.

What is the chance of this happening? Under normal circumstances, it would be quite high, since it is not uncommon for privately financed consumption and invest-

ment to grow by at least 5 per cent per annum at the peak of a boom. However, there is another crucial factor we need to consider this time – the strength of sterling, which will severely curtail export growth and, more important, redistribute the strength of domestic demand away from the UK and towards imports from other countries. In other words, the UK economy will not grow at anything like the same rate as the growth in consumers' expenditure and investment at home. According to recent estimates by Goldman Sachs, the worsening in net trade will depress GDP growth by about 1.75 per cent next year, if sterling stays at its present level.

Thus, if GDP next year is to grow by 3 per cent, overall domestic demand would need to grow by 4.75 per cent to make up for the trade loss. But in order to achieve this, privately financed domestic demand would need to grow by about 8 per cent in real terms in order to compensate for the absence of any growth in the public sector. This is not impossible – in fact it happened in 1988 – but it does give some idea of the degree of policy tightening which is already in the system.

It also gives some idea of the acuteness of the dilemma facing the Bank of England, since if sterling stays where it is, and if the Government can stick to its spending plans, then the Bank is already risking overkill. But if either of these "ifs" does not come to pass, then interest rates almost certainly need to rise much further – or, more accurately, will have needed to have increased some time before.

To successfully negotiate this one, the Bank will need, in the words of Cilla Black, "a lotta, lotta luck".

ITV regions urged to adopt single Channel 3 brand

Cathy Newman

Richard Eyre, the incoming chief executive of ITV, is being urged to adopt a single Channel 3 brand at peak viewing times in a move which reflects the increasing consolidation in the independent television market.

The recommendation is contained in a confidential report for the ITV companies prepared by the management consultants Bain & Co, which argues that it would help unify the network in the face of increasingly tough competition from the BBC, Sky and Channel 4.

Some ITV companies worry, however, that the network's

regional identity could be lost if output is branded under a single Channel 3 umbrella.

Mr Eyre, currently chief executive of Capital Radio, takes up the newly created ITV post in the autumn with a remit to unify ITV. One way of doing this would be to substitute regional logos on peak-time programming with a single Channel 3 logo, according to Bain & Co.

Such a move, its supporters argue, seems increasingly logical as ownership of the majority of the 15 franchises now rests in the hands of three big players – Carlton Communications, Granada Group and United News & Media.

The Bain report recommends

that, between 7pm and 11pm, programming should appear under the banner of Channel 3, rather than bearing the logo of each regional franchise.

The suggestion – one of a range of ideas from Bain about the future of ITV – has met with strong resistance in the television industry, even if it has found some sympathy among advertisers and media buyers.

Scottish Media Group in particular feels a single Channel 3 brand would detract from the company's regional identity. A source at Scottish said: "We believe very strongly in the identity of Scottish Television. People here don't talk about ITV; they talk about Scottish."

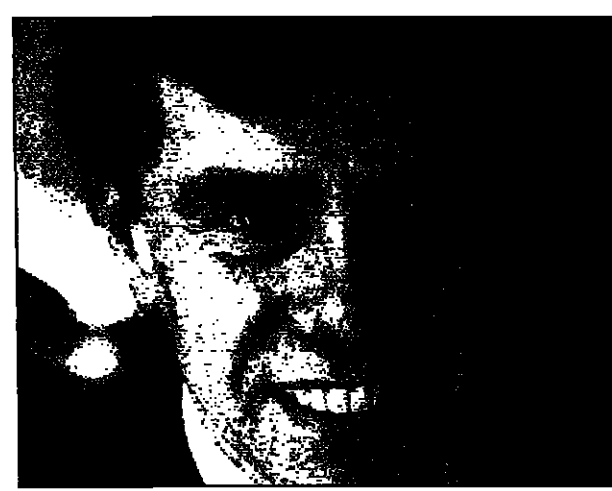
A senior source from another

ITV company added: "One of ITV's strengths is its regional identity. You wouldn't want to ditch that."

Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage, warned earlier this month that the regional characteristics of the ITV franchises should not be lost in the rush to consolidate.

However, some within the industry are in favour of doing away with regional identities so that ITV could then be sold to advertisers as a national brand.

Martin Bowley, managing director of Carlton UK Sales, said: "We're competing against uniform networks like the BBC. What does a viewer care if the programme's from Carlton or



Richard Eyre: Takes up new ITV post this autumn

Granada? It's the quality that matters."

ITV has already moved towards creating a coherent brand with the "Britain's most popular button" advertising campaign. However, the ad has not been a success, and one of Mr Eyre's tasks, as he replaces the Network Centre and

ITV Association structure with the new "ITV Ltd", is to decide on a new marketing strategy to help prevent further loss of viewers.

ITV's share of viewing has slipped from more than 36 per cent at the beginning of the decade, to around 32 per cent in the latest estimates.

IN BRIEF

• The number of companies going into receivership increased in the first half of the year, although the overall trend is down, according to accountants KPMG. Between 1 January and 30 June, there were 656 receiverships, 5 per cent up on the second half of last year but down 14 per cent on the first half of 1996. The only area where there was a rise was in the North-west.

• German companies have overtaken British businesses as the most attractive takeover targets in the European Union for overseas corporate investors, according to another survey by KPMG. In the first six months of the year £8.8bn of foreign corporate investment flowed into Germany, a six-fold increase on the first half of last year. Acquisitions by international companies in the UK fell 40 per cent to \$11.6bn – the first decline for more than three years. KPMG said the decline was probably due to the strong pound and the UK's stance on the single currency.

• A City-based outplacement consultancy called Fairplace Consulting is set to float on AIM on 28 July to raise £765,000, valuing the business at £3.7m. The business was founded in 1992 by chairman Mark Allsop and Colyn Gardner, a non-executive director, and specialises in the financial sector. Nominated advisers are Grant Thornton and brokers are Ellis & Partners.

• Ribo Targets, a new biotechnology company formed by a research team at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge, has received £7m from four private equity funds. Ribo will use the funds to research and develop a new generation of pharmaceuticals for the treatment of HIV and Hepatitis C.

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Street wars in Italy's wild south



It is not unusual for teenage gangsters in Naples to pull out their guns and shoot each other in broad daylight. This is, after all, the quintessential southern city, where criminality is part of the landscape and everything from contraband cigarettes to bootlegged video cassettes can become an excuse for a shoot-out between neighbourhood thugs.

Until recently, though, it wasn't at all usual for passers-by to get caught in the crossfire. Executions were carried out discreetly and professionally, leaving middle-class Naples to go breezily about its business. But no more. In June, a young mother called Silvia Ruotolo was walking home with her five-year-old son from a shopping trip on one of the hills above the city centre when a stray bullet cut her down and killed her.

A week later, a 13-year-old boy was hit in the shoulder in the rough suburb of Pozzuoli as two local bosses were killed in a hail of machine-gun fire. Earlier this month, a hit squad opened fire on a crowded party in Carditello attended by the gangster Tommaso Dolciame. They pumped their target full of bullets, but injured five innocent bystanders, including an eight-year-old girl, in the process.

This alarming spate of attacks, coupled with a leap in the overall crime rate (17 per cent up on last year, including a 30 per cent increase in bag-snatching), has spread panic not just among the city authorities but also the national government. In the past few days, 500 soldiers have been taking up positions outside key buildings in the city centre to respond to what the Interior Minister, Giorgio Napolitano, has called "the most critical crime situation in Italy". The idea is that the army will take over regular patrolling duties and free up several hundred local policemen to launch a full-frontal onslaught on the Camorra, as the Neapolitan mafia is known. The soldiers play a symbolic role, too, reassuring the public and letting the clan bosses know that the state means business.

But it is not clear just how much impact they can make. Already, since their arrival, the killings have continued, some of them so many as a few hundred yards from the main city buildings around Piazza del Municipio. To the east of Naples' main street, the Via Roma, life is clean, decent and much like any other southern European city. To the west, gangland begins with the notorious Quartieri Spagnoli and the state, for all its rhetoric and crime-busting efforts, is as remote as a Caliph's court from the Arabian Nights.

"In some ways, the state cannot compete with the Camorra," said Amato Lombardi, leader of the Naples provincial council and an expert on organised crime. "We have an official unemployment rate of 25 per

Teenage junkies can be more lethal than the Mafia, Andrew Gumbel writes from Naples

cent, while in the organised crime world everyone has a job. For a kid of 15 or 16 from one of the poorer neighbourhoods, crime is the only realistic option open to them and they will do anything regardless of the risk."

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the soldiers have arrived now and intend to stay no later than Christmas. The charismatic, popular mayor of Naples, Antonio Bassolino, has built his reputation by claiming to clean up this most chaotic of western European cities. In November, he is up for re-election and the last thing he needs is an upsurge in the murders, armed robberies, street corner hold-ups and car thefts that still make many Italians think twice before setting foot in the place.

The recent crime spree has all too awkwardly highlighted the limits of Mr Bassolino's power. He has cleaned old churches, imposed a minimum of order on

can make ends meet by stealing a moped for a local boss, or taking a consignment of stolen car radios to market for resale, or agreeing to ferry heroin and cocaine to the affluent cities of the north.

In one way, Mr Bassolino has been a victim of his own success. The arrest of the Camorra bosses has created a power vacuum in almost every sector of the black economy, effectively sparking a war between no fewer than 30 families within Naples and more than 80 in the surrounding area. The discipline that once kept a lid on petty crime and maintained some kind of control over the choice and number of vendettas has simply disappeared, creating a dangerous free-for-all.

The professional hitmen of yesteryear have been replaced with angry teenagers, many of them on drugs, who decide to take out their revenge first and only ask themselves about the wisdom of their actions later. Since druged-out teenagers can only rarely shoot straight, innocent bystanders are getting sucked into the violence as well.

It is hard to see a way out of the morass as long as the state remains so weak and major-league investors refuse to challenge the economic stranglehold of the Camorra, with all the risks that entails. Naples is also beset with a rather romantic image of its own criminality. There is something undeniably attractive about boisterous eight-

year-olds selling you snacks from illegal street stalls, or shopkeepers surreptitiously showing you their collection of high-quality, very cheap recordings of first-release movies, or wide-boys patiently telling you how to make long-distance calls on specially doctored mobile phones that will then be charged to some unsuspecting businessman in Piacenza or Verona.

The latest crime headlines have caused some Neapolitans to feel strangely contrite. "I too am responsible for Silvia Ruotolo's death," said her cousin, the television journalist Sandro Ruotolo. "Naples will never change if the Neapolitans don't change first."

We help the bosses every time we buy contraband cigarettes, or pay a *camorrista* to look after our parked cars, or play the black-market football pools, or buy a second-hand car radio. Who hasn't done at least one of these things? I know I have."

The trouble with that argument is that Mr Ruotolo is effectively asking his fellow citizens to behave with the rectitude of Swiss bus passengers. Naples may be full of surprises but turning itself into a mini-Switzerland is not on the cards. The lack of strict rules and respect for authority is Naples' greatest strength as a city and the source of all its charm and inventiveness. The fact that, paradoxically, this is also its great weakness is something Naples may simply have to learn to live with.



Wish you were here: Naples' mayor Antonio Bassolino has encouraged tourists to his city, but crime is on the increase



Poor outlook: Crime is the only option for teenagers from the parts of Naples tourists never see, but a shoot-out between Camorra factions led to the death (top left) of a two-year-old along with Giuseppe Averaimo. Photograph: Rex Features

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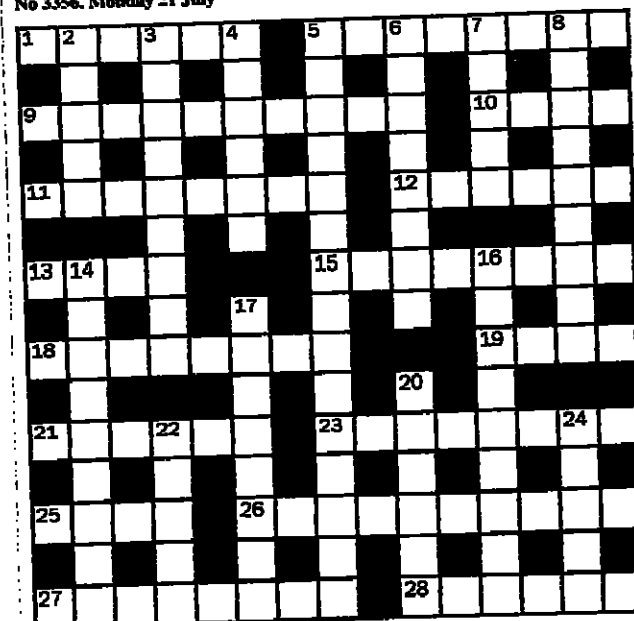
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3356, Monday 21 July By Purita



- ACROSS**
- Chap grabs a cat going back for rodent (6)
 - Front rugby player gets hold (8)
 - Outfit lie about legal action (6,4)
 - Run from behind to draw level (4)
 - Look to be in favour of church service (3,5)
 - Party of people seizing navy transport (6)
 - Fish grounds I abandon (4)
 - Soundly administers foreign lands (8)
 - Almighty catastrophe? (3,2,3)
 - He's stupid to prosecute cook (4)
 - Must the centre follow with a ban (4,2)
 - Title's no longer available immediately (5,3)
 - Fruit's rotten, we're told

- DOWN**
- Thai olive dish contains mayonnaise (5)
 - Policy aims often get spelt out (9)
 - Hear about man's love of abstract knowledge (6)
 - Home Guard? (9,6)
 - Fond of junior diplomat's daughter (8)
 - US city can be of a Spanish type (5)
 - Anti-nuclear group take in even American President (9)
 - A difference over money involving river port (9)
 - Piece of furniture damaged tiled base (4,5)
 - I let out a number in the dark (8)
 - Gave approval to old soldiers going in (6)
 - Points out many object to privileged class (5)
 - "Life's terrible" reveals famous clown (5)

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